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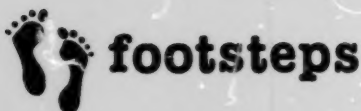
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ABSTRACT

This discussion guide coordinates with the first 20 films in a series intended for use by leaders in working with parents, prospective parents, childcare workers, and students of child development within civic groups, church groups, and other community organizations concerned with the welfare of children. It is designed to aid leaders in helping others interpret the film series and apply the messages to their own lives. The core of each film program is a 20 minute drama followed by a summarizing documentary segment. Five families representing distinct backgrounds alternate as the central focus of the dramas. Each unit consists of background information, a bibliography related to the program theme, a parent information sheet, a list of characters in the drama and synopses of both sections of the film, discussion questions related to the major learnings of the film, and discussion questions and related comments designed to help group members relate the program learnings to their own experiences. (Author/JEG)

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part I: (Programs 1-20)

Developed by a consortium of:

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TO THE LEADER

The FOOTSTEPS series focuses on important opportunities and challenges faced by all prospective parents and parents of young children. This Discussion Guide is intended for leaders who work with parents, prospective parents, childcare workers and students of child development within civic groups, church groups and other community organizations concerned with the welfare of children. The guide is designed to aid leaders in helping others interpret the films and apply the messages to their own lives.

Part I of the Discussion Guide covers the first 20 programs in the film series, Part II is for programs 21-30. Both volumes are identical in format and purpose.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GUIDE

This Discussion Guide is divided into 20 units, each devoted to an accompanying program in the FOOTSTEPS series. Each unit consists of:

Background information, a narrative that includes a summary of major learnings, a discussion of the theme and practical suggestions for parents.

For Further Information, a bibliography for further reading on the program theme, suitable for both leaders and group members.

Parent information sheet, a page of practical suggestions intended to be duplicated and given to parents. (The exact title of this page is appropriate to the specific topic being dealt with.)

The Program, a list of characters in the drama, and synopses of both the drama and documentary sections of the film.

After The Program, discussion questions related to major learnings of the film, with comments that respond to these questions and/or provide additional information.

Beyond The Program, discussion questions and related comments designed to help group members apply the program learnings to their own experiences.

The units in the Discussion Guide are given in the same order as the FOOTSTEPS television series.

ORGANIZATION OF THE FILM SERIES

The core of each film program is a 20-minute drama followed by a summarizing documentary segment. Five families representing distinct backgrounds alternate as the central focus of the dramas:

The Sandburgs: White middle-class working parents (Jeannie and Amos) with two children (Allison and Chris)

The Marshalls: A black middle-class family which includes a working father (Ted), a mother and part-time student (Sandy), and two children (Marc and Portia)

The Hornbrenners: Recently divorced parents (Bob and Sheila) with a young daughter (April)

The Rileys: Rural working-class teenage parents who have a baby (Cameron)

The Sanchezes: A Mexican-American working-class extended family including a father (Joe), a mother (Maggie), their daughter (Christina), Maggie's uncle (Tio Daniel), and Maggie's sister (Cindy).

USE OF THE GUIDE

The Discussion Guide should be regarded as a framework within which the leader can be flexible and creative. Some of the features that make the guide easy and adaptable to use are listed below.

1. *Each unit is "self-contained" and can be used independently.* For example, if your group has a special interest in the bonding process between parent and baby, you may wish to select the unit on "Attachment and Independence." Or, you may wish to select a number of programs related to one overall theme. For example, for the theme of helping children develop a positive self-image, you could use "Loving Your Children," "Competence," "Children's Individuality" and "Identity." And, of course, themes can also be selected solely on the basis of the interest expressed by your participants.
2. *Units may be used in any order.* A certain order is recommended, however, if several shows in the Riley or Hornbrenner series are viewed. Because of chronology *I'll Dance at Your Wedding* ("The Handicapped Child") should be seen last in the Riley series. The Hornbrenner saga should unfold in this order: *The First Signs of April* ("The Need for Early Stimulation"); *Love Me and Leave Me* ("Attachment and Independence"); and *There Comes a Time* ("Societal Support").
3. *There is a wide choice of activities and questions within each unit.* The questions and activities suggested in "Before the Program," "After the Program," and "Beyond the Program" are designed to help you respond to people with differing needs, interests and knowledge about child development. For this reason, far more questions and activities are included than could possibly be covered in one session.
4. *The questions in "Before the Program," "After the Program," and "Beyond the Program" are addressed directly to group members.* It is hoped that these questions will trigger other questions such as "Why?", "What are some clues that...?" and "How do you think you would have reacted...?"
5. *The comments following the questions can stimulate your own thinking, emphasize a point, or provide further information.* The comments are intended to be used as guidelines for focusing the group's answers on key learnings. They are not the "right answers."
6. *Although a definite order of discussion has been suggested — through "Before the Program," "After the Program," and "Beyond the Program" — this also is flexible.* For example, if group members view the programs at home, you may want to begin by raising questions from "After the Program."

It is hoped that these materials will be adaptable to the needs and interests of your group, and increase understanding of the young child.

IDENTITY: THE "I'S" HAVE IT

Queen for a Day

Who am I? Many people associate this question with adolescence, mid-life, or other turning points in life. Actually, it is as babies and young children that we first start to grope for "me," and it is during these early years that parents and other adults begin to shape our picture of ourselves.

The search for identity, then, is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout life.

THE BIG IDEAS

Every person has the need to feel special and unique.

Children's search for identity expresses itself in many different ways and sometimes brings them into conflict with other family members.

When parents realize that many of their children's behaviors are efforts to establish identity, they are better able to help their children in this effort.

THE SOURCE OF SELF

Newborn babies don't know that they are persons. They don't even realize that their fingers belong to them and their mothers' fingers belong to someone else. To them, the world is all one thing.

Gradually, however, babies discover that their bodies belong to them. By touching, tasting, looking, listening, smelling, and moving around, babies learn where their bodies end and the rest of the world begins. This is the first step toward self-awareness.

Another important step takes place when children learn to talk. Now they can call themselves by their own names. Language gives them a tool for describing themselves and thinking of themselves as separate and unique.

TESTING 1, 2, 3...

As children grow and start to move around, they learn that they can make things happen. They express their growing sense of "me" in a variety of behaviors that all parents will recognize:

Me Do It! As toddlers work toward self-reliance, or autonomy, they want to do more things for themselves.

No! Defiance is one way in which children declare themselves to be separate persons with minds of their own.

That's Mine! Young children have to feel sure that certain things are "mine" before they can let go of them and share them with other people.

Look at Me! Children need to prove to people who are important to them that they can make things happen.

Guess Who I Am! As children pretend to be other people, they begin to see what they can become.

Me First! At times, all children want the exclusive attention of their parents.

The competition of brothers and sisters for their parents' attention sometimes results in conflicts. Tensions develop between parents and children, too, because each member of a family works to attain an identity. Many of these conflicts are an inevitable part of growing up. Sometimes, however, family tensions are a clue to parents that children need more help finding their place in the world.

INCREASING VISIBILITY

Children act. Parents react. This is how self awareness develops. The actions and responses of parents are like mirrors in which the child's image is reflected.

To make sure that this image is clear, parents can:

Show Children How They Are Special

Whether they are answering toddlers' endless questions or changing babies' endless diapers, parents can help children become more aware and proud of themselves. They can provide children with basic information about their bodies, help them understand their feelings, and point out children's special strengths and accomplishments.

Provide Children With Opportunities To Do Things Themselves

Identity grows when parents give children a part to play in everyday situations. By letting children do things for themselves, parents support children in their struggle to be independent. By giving children simple but useful tasks to do around the house, parents show children that they have something to contribute to the family.

Try To Experience the World As Children Do

Parents can deal with family tensions more effectively if they try to look at them from the child's point of view. By looking for the source of behaviors and conflicts, parents often find that children are just trying to develop and assert their identity. Understanding children's feelings and needs often leads parents to strategies that strengthen children's identity and, at the same time, lessen family tensions.

— • —

The growth of identity is a lifelong process. Many persons and things, both inside and outside the home, affect this process. No other experiences, however, are as enduring as those of the first years of life. Nothing can replace the reflections of parents who know their children, care for them, and use this knowledge and affection to help their children "become."

For Further Information...

Dibs in Search of Self. Virginia M. Axline. New York: Ballantine Books, 1964. (paperback)

Black Child Care. James P. Comer, M.D. and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D. New York: Pocket Books, 1975. (paperback)

The Magic Years. Selma Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. (paperback)

Toddlers and Parents. T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. New York: Dell, 1974. (paperback)

From "I" to "We." Caring for Children series, No. 8. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (booklet)

Passages. Gail Sheehy. New York: Bantam Books, 1974. (paperback)

THE PROGRAM

Queen for a Day

Characters:

Jeannie Sandburg — a young mother

Amos Sandburg — Jeannie's husband

Allison — 5-year-old daughter of Jeannie and Amos

Christopher — Allison's 2½-year-old brother

Mr. Cutter — Amos' boss

Allison's teacher

Jeannie's mother

Babysitter

Christopher's teacher

Drama:

Jeannie and Amos notice that something seems to be "the matter" with Allison.

As the day begins, Allison is upset because Christopher has scribbled in one of her books. Jeannie promises Allison he won't do this again, but Allison doesn't believe it. She protests about wearing pants to school like Christopher. In frustration, Jeannie tells Allison to wear whatever she wants. Allison shows up for breakfast in a pink party dress, explaining that she's going to be the "Queen" in school today. Jeannie sends her back upstairs to change.

In the car, Allison tries to tell her parents that she is going to be a "Queen," but they are discussing their own plans for the day. When Christopher is dropped off at school, Allison is disappointed because his teacher, formerly Allison's, pays no attention to her. Back in the car, she tries again to get her parents' attention, but is unsuccessful.

In school, Allison's teacher picks another child to be "Queen." Allison withdraws from the class and develops a stomach-ache. Jeannie is covering a news story, so Amos has to pick Allison up, even though he is very busy. When Jeannie returns to the office and calls Amos, he is brusque because his boss is becoming impatient. Jeannie is annoyed at his incomplete answers, and they argue. Jeannie goes home and finds an apparently well Allison dancing for her grandmother and insisting that she "watch me."

That night, Allison tells Jeannie how she'd felt "invisible" that day, and Amos explains to Jeannie that Allison's stomach-ache was a result of not being chosen "Queen." Amos and Jeannie make up with each other and agree to help Allison feel more "visible."

Documentary:

Three mothers discuss special situations that affect children's identity, including:

the first-born child's need for recognition when a new baby arrives
the younger child's need to assert independence and ownership rights.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Have the members of your group discuss what the concept of identity means to them. For example:

When does the search for identity begin?

How long does it last?

What are some of the major influences on children's identity?

Why do some children develop a more positive sense of identity than others?

OR

Write the following phrases on a chalkboard or large piece of paper:

"Me do it!"

"No!"

"That's mine!"

"Look at me!"

"Me first!"

Ask the members of the group whether they have heard young children say these things:

Do you see any relationship between these statements and the search for identity?

Do these behaviors indicate the growth of self-awareness and self-assertion?

Have parents take a child's point of view and try to understand the feelings and needs that might motivate a child to say these things.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to look for answers to the following questions as they view *Queen for a Day*:

What are the things that upset Allison?

How do Allison's parents respond to her behavior?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What was "the matter" with Allison?

What were the things that upset her?

How did she feel all day?

How did she try to let people know that things were not right for her?

Did she act like other 5-year-old children you know?

Comments: Allison wanted to be seen as somebody special, to have her rights respected, and to be allowed to make some decisions on her own. She felt that she was either being ignored or being treated like her brother. Things just kept happening to threaten her sense of identity. These included:

Christopher's drawing on her book

being asked to dress like her brother

not being allowed to wear the dress she chose for school

being ignored by her parents in the car

feeling rejected by Christopher's teacher

not being chosen "Queen."

All these incidents snowballed, and by the end of the day Allison felt invisible.

How did Allison get lost in the shuffle?

Do her parents care about her?

How did Jeannie and Amos respond to Allison's behavior?

Did they seem sensitive to her needs?

Do you think this was a typical day?

Comments: The Sandburgs are caring, conscientious parents. Because they were not aware of Allison's need to establish an identity, however, they did not respond to her behaviors in ways that met this need. For example:

When Christopher wrote on Allison's book, Jeannie simply promised that it wouldn't happen again.

They didn't recognize Allison's need to talk about her own day in the car.

They didn't see that she wanted to make up her own mind about what to wear.

They may have been just too caught up in their own problems that day to hear Allison's call for recognition.

How can Jeannie and Amos help Allison feel more visible?

What could they have done differently so that Allison would not have felt invisible?

If they give Allison more attention, will they spoil her?
Are Amos and Jeannie working on their own identities, too? What clues do we get about this?
Was Jeannie's mother right — was Jeannie trying to juggle too many responsibilities?
Was Amos sympathetic to Jeannie's needs?
How can Amos and Jeannie help each other in their search for identity?

Comments: Even though Amos and Jeannie both work, they could have satisfied Allison's needs through a few minutes attention when problems arose. For example:

Jeannie could have helped Allison find a place to put her book where Christopher couldn't get it, or given Christopher something else to draw on.

Jeannie could have given Allison a choice between two or three outfits to wear to school.

Jeannie and Amos could have taken a few minutes out of their conversation to listen to Allison.

Parents who don't work are apt to make the same mistakes as Jeannie and Amos.

Some parents worry that if they encourage their children to express their identity, the children will become concerned only with themselves and won't be able to get along with other people. On the contrary, the more confident of themselves children become, the more secure they feel, and the easier it is for them to get along with other people.

What effect did birth order have on the needs of the children in the documentary?

How does the birth of a new baby affect a first-born child? How can parents help make the addition of a new child easier for the first child?

What are the special needs and feelings of a later-born child? In the scene with the book, was the second-born child acting selfishly? Should her mother have made the daughter share her book?

Comments: When each child in a family is treated as an individual and helped to build a positive identity, tensions commonly arising between first-born and later children are lessened. A first-born child can be given extra reassurance and recognition when a new baby arrives. Second- and later-born children can be given opportunities to assert their uniqueness. In refusing to share her book with her older sister, the second-born child in the documentary was probably trying to con-

firm that some things are hers. When parents respect this need of children to possess fully before they share, children are more likely to be generous as they grow older.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents share their own observations of children's efforts to develop and express identity.

What kinds of behaviors have your own children displayed in their search for "me"?

How do you respond to these behaviors?

Are your responses as effective as you'd like them to be?

Can you think of other possible ways to respond?

Comments: Parents will probably recall many experiences similar to those that Allison experienced, and those described earlier in this chapter. For example, how often have their children said "no" to them? Vied for their attention? Refused to share toys? Boasted about something they could do?

Ask the members of your group in what ways they are still working on their own identities.

How long does the search for identity last?

Does becoming a parent affect one's identity?

Do your own struggles for recognition and self-awareness affect your relationship with your children? With your mate?

Comments: The search for identity is a lifelong process. As we encounter new life experiences, we continually define and redefine ourselves. Parenthood is a special challenge that forces us once again to expand our sense of self.

How does the search of children and parents for identity affect relationships within the family?

Do conflicts ever develop between siblings as a result of their need for recognition and independence?

Can these tensions be lessened?

Can they be eliminated?

Comments: Although conflicts within families can be lessened by acknowledging everyone's need for recognition, they can probably never be completely eliminated. Conflicts are part of growing up and living within a social world. They help children learn that other people have needs and may think differently from them. Through these collisions, children can learn to give and take.

How can parents help children build a sense of identity?

Does strengthening children's identity take extra time? Effort? Special knowledge?

How do you think you've helped your own children in their struggle for identity?

Comments: Parents can provide children with the positive reflections they need during the course of everyday situations. Some general guidelines to follow are listed in the first part of this chapter. You could also hand out copies of "Some Reflections on Identity" (page 4) and ask parents for other ideas and suggestions.

How do people and experiences outside the family affect children's identity?

For example, what influences do television programs, books, and magazines have?

Do some children — for example, members of minority groups — need special help in developing a positive identity?

What can parents do to combat negative influences on their children's identity?

Comments: Television programming and other media can exert a strong influence on how children feel about their sex or race. Sometimes, too, people outside the family make unfair or unkind judgments of children based on these factors. Part of a parent's job is to help children cope with these influences on their children's identity.

The strategies for helping children build a positive self-image are the same for all children. If children are given the warmth and support they need to develop a solid identity while they are young, it will be easier for them to resist negative stereotypes and influences later on. Parents who fear that their children's expectations or sense of self-worth may be limited by stereotypes they encounter can make a special effort to provide their children with books that show people of their sex or race doing lots of different things, and by taking them places where they see people like themselves functioning in many different roles.

In *Black Child Care*, James P. Comer and Alvin F. Poussaint have advised parents of black children:

As the child grows older, learning black history and experiencing black culture can add to his pride and broaden his sense of identity. Helping a child learn strategies to deal with racism and the negative feelings about being black that racism incurs is very helpful. But nothing can substitute for the love, care and training that the child needs from birth onward...

A positive black identity (secondary identity) must be built on an inner core of pride and positive feelings (primary identity) or it may fade away under the harsh light of life's realities.

This observation can apply to all the races in the world.

CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUALITY: A FACT TO CELEBRATE

No Comparison

Human differences are a fact of life. They are not only natural, but desirable. Society needs a range of talents and personalities to function well. At the same time, though, society sometimes pushes people to be like everyone else. Children, especially, are often expected to fit into a certain mold.

This desire for sameness goes against all the laws of nature. Children are individuals from the very beginning, and they demand to be seen and treated as such.

THE BIG IDEAS

With children, as in all of nature, there is a wide range of normal differences.

Accepting each child's individuality helps a child accomplish what is possible for him or her.

Expecting children to be what they are *not* may hinder them in reaching their unique potential.

A UNIQUE BEGINNING

Each of us is a unique experiment.

Physically, mentally, and emotionally, each of us is different from anyone else in the world. Because our muscles are different, we all

have our own way of walking, talking, running, writing, and throwing a ball. Because we all have minds of our own, we vary in our ability to use language, to add and subtract, and to memorize. Because our nerves are strong differently, each of us hears, sees, tastes, smells, and feels pain in our own way. We differ in our energy level, sleep pattern, body temperature, interests, and talents.

In virtually every area of human growth, each of us is truly an individual.

These human differences arise from two factors:

HEREDITY — the set of genes passed down to us from our parents
and

ENVIRONMENT — the people, things and experiences
that influence our development.

Because no two children inherit the same combination of genes and have the same experiences, all children — even those in the same family — are different. We can see these differences right from birth. Long-term studies of babies have identified a number of major ways in which they differ:

energy level

regularity of physical responses, such as hunger and sleepiness

adaptability to change in routine

sensitivity to stimuli, such as noise or discomfort

approach or withdrawal in response to new situations

intensity of reactions

positive or negative mood

persistence and attention span.

These differences can be observed in babies who are still in the first month of life.

IN THEIR OWN TIME

As they grown older, children continue to express their individuality. Each child has an inner timetable for development. Some children walk at 9 months, others at 18 months. By the time they're 2, many children can speak several hundred words, but some children the same age know a lot more words, and others are just beginning to talk. Some children learn to play with other children very easily; others are slower to reach out to new people and experiences.

All of these children are normal. The range of normal growth is very wide, and has room for many kinds of behaviors.

Of course this does not mean that there's no such thing as being abnormal. Some growth deviations are extreme and may have treatable causes. If a child seems unusually slow in one or more areas of development, it is a good idea to see a doctor.

A PUSH IN THE WRONG DIRECTION

Physical differences like height and hair color are easy for parents to accept in their children. When it comes to other kinds of differences, though — like abilities and temperament — parents sometimes forget the facts of life. In the hope that their children will grow up to be "above-average," like themselves, or like someone they admire, parents sometimes push children to do things that are not possible for them. Such efforts are not only useless, they can also harm children. They prevent children from using their energies to become what is right for them. Instead, children become frustrated, withdraw, and even give up.

Parents who want to help their children develop their own special qualities and talents should remember these DOs and DON'Ts:

Don't Push Children

Like plants, some children bloom early and some are late bloomers. These differences don't necessarily mean one child is more or less bright than another. It just means they're different.

Don't Compare Children with Others

Not everyone can be first, or best, or above-average in everything. We all have built-in strengths and weaknesses. We each have a unique contribution to make to the world. Rather than comparing one child with another, it makes much more sense to help them both develop their own special talents.

Do Respond to Children as Individuals

The successful parent is sensitive to differences among children. When parents give children the freedom to be themselves, they are truly nurturing growth and development.

Do Enjoy Differences

Parents who don't expect their children to fit into a mold are more comfortable with their children and themselves. They feel less of the anxiety and more of the joy of being a parent.

"Vive la difference!"

For Further Information...

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He is a black, smiling, forward-looking man, 25, with a friendly, warm smile that is infectious. He is a man who is not afraid to be different. He is a man who is not afraid to be a pioneer. He is a man who is not afraid to be a leader. He is a man who is not afraid to be a man.

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Joey didn't start talking until just 6 months ago, but he started talking at 10 months. He knows a lot of words for his age, and spends hours looking at books and talking to himself. Since he doesn't always teach out for new things, his parents often find lots of stimulating toys and activities. Joey always accepts them happily. Because he's as regular in his habits, Joey's parents were able to start toilet training him at 18 months.

Della has been sleepless through the night for just a few months. She's still a thriving cherub. She spends hours doing push-ups, then sits up by herself and loves to be stood up. Della is not squeaky about everything, though. She cried loudly at her first bath, and always wails out new sounds the first time she's given them. She'll usually try them, but she'll often squall, however

2 Years

Della has been walking for over a year now. She keeps her parents very busy trying to keep her out of trouble. Della is still determined to do things her own way, and has temper tantrums if she can't. Her parents try to remain calm but firm. Della dislikes change, and still refuses to sit still long enough to use the toilet. Her parents know that sooner or later she'll decide to go potty.

1 Year

Della cried and put up a fuss on the first day of school, but by the end of the week she was starting to enjoy herself. It's a bit hard for her to sit still very long and concentrate on anything. Everyone likes Della, though. The other children try to imitate her skill on the playground, but most of them can't learn to do it.

THE PROGRAM

No Comparison

Characters:

Sandy Marshall — a young mother

Ted Marshall — Sandy's husband

Portia — Sandy and Ted's 3-year-old daughter

Marc — Portia's 5-year-old brother

Grandpa Wilson — Sandy's father

Grandma Wilson — Sandy's mother

James Lee — Sandy's brother

Raynel — James Lee's wife

Mo — Sandy's brother

Claudette — Mo's wife

Kevin, Linwood, Jeffrey and Lisa — the Wilson children

Drama:

The Marshalls arrive at the park where the Wilson family's annual picnic is held. Sandy and Marc, like the other members of Sandy's family, have always done well at sports and are looking forward to the games that will take place that day. Ted and Portia, who are not athletically inclined, are less eager. During the food preparations, James Lee and Mo boast about their physical prowess and tease Ted about his lack of athletic skill.

Meanwhile, the children are playing, and Portia is having a hard time. When she tries to join a game of kickball, the other children won't let her play because she can't run fast enough. She tries to do cartwheels but she can't do them very well. Lisa climbs up a slide and calls to Portia to follow, but Portia is afraid. Lisa calls Portia a "baby."

Sandy and Ted disagree about how to help Portia. Sandy encourages Portia to keep trying and shows her how to do things better. Ted watches Sandy's efforts with concern. He wants Sandy to leave Portia alone.

After lunch comes the high point of the day: the races. Marc wins the boy's race and Sandy wins the women's race. Portia becomes increasingly tense as the time for the girl's race approaches. She finally takes her doll and slips away into the woods.

When Portia's absence is discovered, the family spreads out to look for her. Claudette finds her sitting on a rock talking to her doll. Portia tells Claudette that she doesn't like picnics because she can't run fast enough. When Sandy and Ted arrive, Portia turns away from

Sandy. Hurt, Sandy explains, "I just wanted Portia to have fun like I used to have when I was a child." Ted adds that Portia just isn't ready to run, and Sandy finally sees that Portia is not a carbon copy of herself, but an individual with her own interests and abilities.

Documentary:

The parents of three sets of fraternal twins explain how their children differ from each other in temperament, interests, and skills.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme....

Discuss human differences. Have parents break up into small groups and come up with lists of ways in which we all differ from each other. Have one group read their list out loud, then have the other groups add items not already named. The lists could be practically endless, which is one of the messages of this unit: human variety is infinite. Have parents discuss whether these differences should be encouraged or discouraged.

OR

Ask the group to respond to these questions:

What is the difference between "average" and "normal"?
Who is the "average" baby?

Normality is the range into which most differences fall. For example, the normal range of height for adult humans runs from under 5 feet to over 7 feet. An average is simply the middle point on this scale. Thus, it is said that the "average" height for a woman is 5 feet 4 inches.

To get across the point that there is no such thing as an "average" baby, and that there is a wide range of normal development into which most differences fall, you can use the example of the bell curve. The bell curve is a graphic way to describe the distribution of a quality or trait. It is often used to show the distribution of intelligence or scores on a test. The largest numbers bunch in the center, and fewer cases end up at the extreme ends:

Those people who fall at the ends are not abnormal, just fewer in number. In human development, too, normalcy is not a point, but a range. Although many children begin to walk around 12 months, those who begin to walk at 9 or 18 months are not abnormal, just fewer in number.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind the following questions as they view *No Comparison*:

Do the people in the film see each other as individuals?

What effects do their expectations have on each other?

Is Portia developing normally?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Did the people in the film treat each other as individuals?

Or was everyone expected to share certain interests and skills?

How did Sandy and Ted differ in what they expected of Portia?

Why did Sandy push Portia to participate in physical activities?

Was Ted more understanding of Portia's situation? Or did he just have lower expectations of Portia?

How did Sandy, Grandma, Grandpa, and Sandy's brothers make their expectations known?

Comments: "You gonna run for Grandma this year?"

"When Mommy was your age, she used to fly all over the place."

Through such remarks and Sandy's constant encouragement, Portia quickly learned that she was expected to excel in physical activities at the family picnic. The Wilson family places a high value on athletic skill and on winning. Even though Portia and Ted do not share the same level of interest and skill in these activities, they were still expected to participate in the games. Ted was teased when he did not "measure up" to the rest of the family.

Sandy thought she had Portia's best interests at heart when she guided her and pushed her to join in the games and races. She wanted Portia to share her enjoyment and success in these activities. Ted was more understanding of Portia's discomfort and reluctance because he was in a similar situation.

What were the effects of the family's expectations on Ted and Portia?

What can happen when you are in a situation or group where your interests and skills are different from those of the majority? How did this affect Portia? Ted? Claudette?

How did each of these persons cope with the situation?

Why did Portia run away?

Have you ever been in, or seen someone else in, a similar situation?

What happened?

Comments: The family's expectations affected Portia, Ted and Claudette in different ways:

Although uncomfortable and defensive, Ted tried to be a "good sport" and participated in the games.

Portia enjoyed playing with the other children, but she refused to be put in situations where she wasn't going to succeed. So she left.

Claudette decided not to let the expectations of others affect her in any way. She did as she pleased.

How should Sandy and Ted respond to Portia?

Should they continue to encourage and help her to participate in physical activities? Or should they leave her alone?

How will Portia ever learn to do things if her parents don't push her?

What might have happened if Portia had run in the race? If Sandy had forced her to go down the slide?

Is Portia developing normally? Or is she behind in her motor development? How would you compare her development with that of April in *The First Signs of April*?

Will Portia ever be ready to race? Is it important for her to learn how to race?

Do Sandy and Ted have different expectations for Portia than for Marc?

Comments: Portia enjoys many physical activities, and she can run, jump, work at turning cartwheels, and climb over rocks. Although she has not come along as far as some 3-year-old children in these areas, she has certainly not tuned out or stopped progressing, as April did in *The First Signs of April*. Her motor development may not be "average," but it is perfectly "normal."

If Sandy and Ted give Portia opportunities for motor development but let her develop at her own rate, she will probably continue to enjoy these activities and become reasonably proficient in motor development. If they push her, however, she may — in self-defense — withdraw from these activities. They should, of course, encourage her in those areas in which she is proficient, such as verbal ability, pouring liquids, etc.

Why did the twins in the documentary turn out so differently?

How were they different from each other? How did this happen?

What about identical twins? Would they grow up to be the same?

How can parents of twins make sure the children's differences are recognized?

Comments: The children in the documentary are fraternal twins, and are different from each other in temperament, interests and skills.

To a somewhat lesser extent, differences are present in identical twins, even though they share the same genes. Long-term studies of identical twins, and observations of them as young babies, have shown individual differences in the first week of life. No two people are the same — not even twins. Research tells us that, even at birth, every infant possesses his own distinct temperament and personality.

It is very important that parents of twins respect and encourage their individuality. Each twin needs to develop feelings of uniqueness and personal identity. For these reasons, experts do not recommend always dressing twins in the same clothes, giving them rhyming names, buying them identical toys, or treating them as a set.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have members of the group think back on their own childhoods.

How did you differ from other members of your family?

Did your parents respond to you as an individual?

Did you ever feel uncomfortable or anxious because you felt you weren't what your parents expected?

How did these expectations affect your growth and behavior and the way you are today?

Comments: By looking at how they were affected by the expectations of their own parents, the members of your group should get a clearer perspective on their behavior toward their own children. Some parents may realize that they tend to expect the same things of their children that were expected of them, regardless of individual interests and skills.

What expectations do parents have for their own children?

Did you have certain hopes for your children before they were born? What were they?

Did your children differ from what you expected? How? When did their individuality become evident? How did you feel about the fact that your children were different from what you expected?

Do you still hold certain expectations for your children? Are they the same for all your children? Or different for each child?

Comments: Most expectant parents have hopes and dreams for their unborn children. They may look forward to a miniature imitation of themselves, who will play football with them, share their interest in music, or gratify them by reading at an early age. In some cases, they may even expect their children to accomplish things they were never able to do.

These kinds of dreams are natural, and it may be impossible to avoid them. It is important, though, to avoid imposing them on children. Children are never what their parents expect. Parents should respect individuality in their children as they do in adults.

Have parents talk about the differences among their children.

How do your children differ from each other — in their physical make-up, skills, interests and temperament?

When did these differences first become discernable?

Did your children develop at different rates?

Did you find some of these differences easier to accept than others?

Why do some differences cause discomfort?

Did you find you were forced to respond to each of your children differently? How did you adapt yourself to your children's differing needs and demands?

How did you manage to meet both your own personal needs and those of your children?

How much do you let them be themselves and how much do you regulate them?

Comments: Some parents try to discourage differences among their children. However, both parents and children are more relaxed when individual differences are accepted and, indeed, prized. Try to help parents see that all children are OK, even though one may be fussier and one may learn to walk at a later time than others. You might even share with them the types of differences listed in the introduction to this chapter. Children's inborn characteristics are not a reflection on parents, but simply the design of nature.

Although these characteristics should be expected and accepted, parents will sometimes have to help children adapt to normal patterns of living. A child whose physiological hunger rhythm is irregular, for example, will have to learn to eat when meals are prepared or to fix his or her own simple snacks between meals.

How can parents help children do their best without pushing them?

What should you do in areas where your children do less well?

What is likely to happen when you push children?

Comments: Children have a natural desire to do their best. Parents do not have to push them to learn and excel. Given enough learning opportunities, firm support, and gentle guidance in those areas where they are weaker, children will move toward their unique potentials.

All children, however, have particular strengths and weaknesses. When parents push children to do more than they are able to in certain areas, children may stop doing their best. They may withdraw, or,

waste their energies trying to be something they are not. Parents should focus on encouraging their children's strengths and successes. (See unit on *Competence*.)

How can parents be sure that a child's differences are normal?

How can you tell when a child's behavior is not just different, but actually outside the normal range of development?

At what point should you seek professional advice or help?

Comments: By reading on their own and becoming familiar with the wide range of behaviors that are normal in children, most parents will be reassured about their own children's behavior and avoid "false alarms." If they do find that their child is later than most other children doing one or another thing, such as standing alone or babbling, it may be just his or her way of doing things. If the child is slower in many areas, though, (for example, in all aspects of physical development, or in both physical and social development) there may be cause for concern. The child may not have been given enough opportunities to develop or there may be a physical basis for the slow development. In any case, a consultation with a pediatrician or family doctor is in order.

Does society push us to conform to certain ideals or patterns of behavior?

In what ways is this helpful?

In what ways does it interfere with individual growth?

How do stereotypes begin? How do they affect individual members of the stereotyped group?

Can anything be done to prevent or change stereotyping?

Comments: Each culture values certain skills, talents, and personality traits more than others. Societies also expect their members to fill certain roles and expectations. For example, different societies expect males to act in certain ways, females in others.

Although society has many good reasons for seeking conformity, the push for sameness can stifle individual growth. Particularly when we stereotype entire groups of people, we dilute the richness of society and waste valuable talents and energies.

THE NEED FOR EARLY STIMULATION: A SENSE OF THE WORLD

The First Signs of April

Many people think that newborn babies do nothing but lie in their cribs all day waiting to be fed or diapered. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. From an early age, babies are ready for action. They are born with a sense of wonder about the world and the equipment they need to explore that world — their five senses. Given the freedom and encouragement to use their senses, children begin to learn at birth, and the greater the variety of experiences they have, the more they learn.

THE BIG IDEAS

Children need to have all their senses stimulated during the first years of life in order to develop to their full potential.

Children learn through contact with many different stimuli, including people, objects, and activities.

Some of the most important ways of providing young children with stimulation are touching, holding, playing, talking, and reading.

THE CRADLE OF LEARNING

Learning is a pleasure for young children. They are born with an enormous curiosity, and they eagerly set out to explore and master as much of the world as possible.

In the first years of life children go about learning through their senses — seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. This arousal of the senses is called sensory stimulation.

Through their senses, young children learn about themselves and the people and things around them. They study new objects or people and eagerly reach out with their eyes, mouths, and feet. Crawling babies are apt to head for any object in sight and examine it by handling it and putting it in their mouths. Even their babbles show that they have been listening very closely in the conversations around them.

By using their senses in these ways, children move ahead in all areas of growth — emotional, social, physical, and intellectual. As they gather information in these ways, children begin to make sense out of the world around them.

Although people learn from sensory experiences all their lives, we know now that the human brain is especially responsive to sensory input during the first years of life. These years form a critical period when the human mind is able to learn especially quickly and easily from sensory stimulation.

Although it is never too late to learn, many experts now believe that the lack of sensory experiences in the early years can never be fully made up. Later attempts to make up for what was missed in the critical period usually take much more time and effort, and may not always be as successful.

AN EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE

It is the joy and privilege of parents to be able to introduce children to the world. Fortunately, this is not difficult. Stimulation of the senses can take place during daily activities like feeding and dressing. It can even help make routine tasks more enjoyable for both parents and children.

Nor do parents need a lot of money or expensive toys or equipment to provide their children with adequate stimulation. Many of the most effective and enjoyable children's toys are objects commonly found in the home. Other toys can be made from inexpensive materials, and many libraries and schools now operate toy lending libraries for families.

Parents can help their children grow and learn about the world in a number of ways.

Create a Stimulating Environment

Parents can provide sensory stimulation through the way they interact

with their children. For example, parents can talk and read to their children from the time they are born. They can name parts of the body while dressing or bathing children, or describe smells and tastes while feeding them.

Parents can also help their children learn by providing them with a wide variety of objects and toys to play with. Objects of different smells, sizes, shapes, sounds, colors, and textures will stimulate all of the senses.

Give Children the Freedom to Discover the World on Their Own

Children learn by trial and error. It's a good idea, therefore, to let children do lots of things for themselves. Children also learn by being physically active. Parents should let children move about freely in safe areas of the home and yard whenever possible.

Parents may also find that there are ways they can arrange their homes so that children can do more things for themselves. They might put children's toys on a low shelf, for example, or hang clothes hooks at a lower level.

Respond to Children's Cues

Children learn best when their level of interest is high. They give many signs that they are ready to learn. They babble and get excited, reach out and smile. By observing their children's behavior, parents can learn to recognize and respond to these cues.

Children can be overstimulated, however. If they are given too much stimulation, or if it is given at a time when they are not ready for it, children will tune out.

The chart on the next page describes some activities that can provide children with stimulation at different ages. Parents who try out these activities find that their own lives are enriched, because they are able to expand their own senses through those of their children:

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THE PROGRAM

The First Signs of April

Characters:

Sheila Hornbrenner — a young working mother

Bob Hornbrenner — Sheila's ex-husband

April Hornbrenner — the 1-year-old daughter of Sheila and Bob

Bill Hall — Sheila's current date

Mrs. Meyer — April's babysitter

Bonnie Hornbrenner — Bob's mother

Neil & Jill Hornbrenner — April's 1- and 2-year old cousins

Marilyn — Sheila's co-worker and friend

Marilyn's 3 children

Drama:

It's a weekend morning, and Sheila has brought April along as she does her weekly chores: grocery shopping, picking up photographs, and washing clothes. As Sheila rushes through these activities, April just sits and watches. Back home, Sheila feeds April while she tries to repair the vacuum cleaner, then turns on the TV to keep April occupied while she gets ready for a date.

When Sheila's date Bill arrives, he comments on how quiet April is. Sheila replies that April is a good baby, and that babies don't do much until they're older. Bob is late to pick up April, so Sheila leaves her with Mrs. Meyer. When Bob finally arrives, Mrs. Meyer is absorbed in a TV game show. She claims that April would rather watch TV than play with toys.

Later on at Bob's home, Bob's mother voices her concern about how much slower April is than her cousin Neil. She tells Bob that when he was April's age, he was "into everything." Meanwhile, at the office where Sheila works, Sheila and Bill run into Marilyn and her three children. Marilyn interacts closely with her children, and they are very alert and bright.

Bob, Sheila, and Bill meet back at Sheila's apartment. Bob asks to talk with Sheila privately. He explains his mother's concern about April, and suggests that the problem may be a result of Sheila's lack of attention to April. Sheila resents this advice, but they finally agree to take April to a specialist.

Now Sheila is concerned. She asks both Bill and Mrs. Meyer if they think there's anything wrong with April. Sheila finally calls

Marilyn, and tells her she needs some help deciding what to do next. Marilyn reassures Sheila and invites her over for a talk.

Documentary:

Dr. J. Ronald Lally of Syracuse University explains how parents can help children use their senses to learn. He advises parents to:

watch their children to see what interests them

provide experiences for sensory learning

talk to their children

encourage them to feel, touch, and explore with their senses.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme....

Bring in a few pictures of babies using their senses to explore the world. Have parents discuss what senses the children are using and what they are learning:

How important is this kind of exploration?

How have you seen your own children learning through their senses?

OR

Have parents try to discover the world as a newborn baby does:

Look at your hands and move them as if you never saw them before
Close your eyes and *listen* to different sounds — paper crumpling, an
object dropping

Shut your eyes and *smell* different things — chalk, coffee

Move around, *tasting* and *touching* things.

OR

Have parents discuss one or more of the following questions:

When do babies start becoming aware of the people and things around them?

How do babies and young children learn about their world?

What can parents do to help babies and young children grow and learn?

In whichever of the above activities you choose, you will want to be sure that the role of sensory stimulation in young children's learning is discussed.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind three questions as they view *The First Signs of April*:

How does April respond to the people and things around her?

What kinds of learning experiences do her parents provide?

What is "wrong" with April?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What was wrong with April?

How could you tell something was wrong?

Did April seem very aware of her environment?

How did she respond to other children and adults? To toys and objects? To new places and events?

How does April's behavior compare with that of her cousins and with Marilyn's children? With other 1-year-old children you know?

Is it fair to compare April with these other children?

Comments: April has not been receiving the amount or type of sensory stimulation that she needs to move ahead at this point in her development. Because she is understimulated, she is not progressing very rapidly. Her lack of awareness of the people and things around her is evident from her lack of:

response to people who talk to her
curiosity about objects in her environment
any sounds other than crying -
physical movement
ability to feed herself.

How did April's understimulation happen?

Do Sheila and Bob care about April?

What did Sheila think April's needs were?

How did she attempt to provide for these needs?

How did Sheila's interaction with April differ from Marilyn's behavior with her children?

How did Bob interact with April?

How did the babysitter contribute to April's problem? What does this suggest you should look for in a babysitter?

Is April's understimulation related to the fact that Sheila works? To the divorce? Can single or working parents provide their children with adequate stimulation?

Comments: Understimulation is not necessarily the result of a divorce or separation. The same things might have happened with April if her parents had remained together. Single parents can provide their children with adequate stimulation. Nor do children have to suffer from understimulation because both their parents work. Working parents who are aware of the need can find the time to provide their children with adequate stimulation. The *quality* of the stimulation is as important as the *quantity* of stimulation.

April's parents seem to care about her very much, and her physical needs are well provided for. April's understimulation seems to be the result of her parent's lack of knowledge about the young child's sensory needs. Although not intentional, their lack of attention to this aspect of April's development amounts to neglect.

Mrs. Meyers, April's babysitter, is also oblivious to April's sensory needs. She watched television constantly without talking to April about what was going on. She left April in her playpen with no toys or other objects to play with. She failed to play or interact with April at all.

What would Dr. Lally say to Sheila and Bob?

What general advice did Dr. Lally give to parents in the documentary segment at the end of the film?

What opportunities did Sheila miss to carry out his suggestions? How did she interact with April when feeding her? On errands?

Would it take a lot more of Sheila's time and energy to provide April with the stimulation she needs?

Would Sheila and Bob need special training or more money to do the things Dr. Lally suggests?

Can Sheila do these things if she works?

Does April need professional help? Or will her parents be able to help her themselves by paying more attention to her sensory needs?

What would you do if April were your daughter?

Comments: According to Dr. Lally's advice, Sheila and Bob overlook many opportunities to provide April with sensory stimulation. For example, they fail to:

let April move freely outside her playpen while one of them is nearby
talk with April rather than at her while feeding, diapering, and taking care of her

point out objects and talk about what is happening during errands
play with April and provide her with interesting objects and toys to look at and play with.

All of these experiences could be provided during their normal, everyday interactions with April.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents talk about how they've noticed young children using their senses to explore the world.

In each case, what do you think the child was learning?
How could you have encouraged and supported the child's explorations?

Comments: Parents should have many observations and experiences to share. For example, most of them will probably have noticed how young children:

stare at people or objects for long periods of time
examine new objects by handling and tasting them
babble and imitate the sound of human voices.

Try to come up with examples of children using all the senses — sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Help parents to see how sensory stimulation plays a crucial role not just in intellectual development, but also in social, emotional, and physical growth. For example, young children develop emotional security by feeling the warmth of their parents' bodies and hearing the sound of their voices. Children learn about colors, sizes, and shapes by looking at and playing with such toys as crib mobiles or the contents of the grocery cart. By reaching for and grabbing nearby objects, they develop physical strength and coordination.

Ask parents to suggest some ways in which they could stimulate children's senses during everyday activities.

Do these activities take a lot of time and energy?

Can they help to make everyday routines more fun? To expand parents' own sensory awareness?

Do you know of some other experiences — e.g., special activities, trips, or games — that can encourage use of the senses?

Comments: Parents have lots of opportunities to help their children see, hear, touch, smell, taste, and talk about the world around them. Many of these opportunities take place during everyday routines, and can help to make these tasks more enjoyable for both parents and children. Some of the suggestions parents might make are to:

talk to children about the parts of their bodies while bathing and dressing them
point out objects for children to look at during walks and errands, and encourage children to feel and smell these objects
let children handle boxes and foods of different sizes and shapes during trips to the grocery store.

3.

You might come up with a list of activities that most families do inside the home (for example, cooking, eating, getting dressed, and house-cleaning) and outside (for example, taking a walk, riding in a bus or car, shopping, going to the doctor). For each activity, have the members of the group come up with 2 or 3 things that parents could say or do to encourage children of different ages to use their senses.

Do parents need expensive equipment and toys to provide children with adequate sensory stimulation?

Do rich people have an advantage in being sure their children's senses are stimulated?

What are some materials and objects found in most homes that can be used for this purpose?

What inexpensive toys have you found that are stimulating to children?

Comments: Sensory stimulation is not an expensive proposition. Parents will probably have had the experience of buying a child an expensive toy, only to watch the child become absorbed in the box or wrapping paper that the toy came in. Children are stimulated by many simple objects, such as:

pieces of textured cloth such as felt, burlap, velvet, or flannel
empty milk cartons that they can drop things into or use as blocks
pots, pans, and bowls for fitting inside each other, dropping things into, and banging

large cardboard boxes for climbing in and out of.

Other toys can be made from inexpensive materials. For example, a crib mobile can be made by dangling wooden spoons, balls, bells, or bright pieces of cloth from a piece of sturdy string.

In each case — household objects, home-made toys, and store-bought toys — have parents talk about what sense(s) the object or toy might stimulate.

How can parents make the home a place where young children can learn and explore?

Do you have to remodel your home to do this?

How do you let children explore safely?

Comments: A few minor modifications can make any home a place where children can explore and learn. For example, parents could:

set up an area where children can move about on their own

put toddler's toys and books where they can reach them

make or buy some furniture geared to children's size, and provide objects such as a small broom or rake so children can help with chores

where possible, arrange the house so that as children get older they can manage things by themselves. For example, they could hang some coat hooks at a low height, and provide boxes or stepstools so that children can reach their own clothes or washcloths.

So that children's explorations will not lead them to harm, parents should also take basic safety precautions such as:

- removing all fragile, sharp, or other dangerous objects from areas where children are exploring

- locking up or putting out of children's reach all poisons, medicines, and other toxic household products

- covering up or blocking off all electrical plugs, outlets, and dangling cords

- making sure there are no small objects that could be swallowed by an infant on the floor or within the child's reach.

PREPARING FOR PARENTHOOD: TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Two to Get Ready

In one sense, both parents are pregnant. The woman bears the child, of course, but both the man and the woman bear new feelings. The birth of a baby is also the birth of a parent — the start of a new way of life and the beginning of new responsibilities. Just as the baby takes time to develop in the womb, so the parent needs time to get ready for his or her new role. Like the baby's prenatal care, preparation for parenthood makes a big difference.

THE BIG IDEAS

Preparation for parenthood means getting ready, both physically and psychologically, for the birth of a child.

This preparation starts in childhood and intensifies during pregnancy.

It's natural for expectant parents to have mixed feelings before the child is born.

The whole family benefits when parents share feelings, obtain birth and baby care information, and make decisions before the baby is born.

BEFORE THE FACT

Preparation for parenthood starts long before people even begin to think of having children of their own. The process begins when they start to form attitudes toward children and parents. Their first ideas about what it's like to be a father or mother come from watching their own parents. The way they feel toward children stems from their parents' attitudes as well as their own experiences caring for younger brothers, sisters, or neighborhood children.

Even health habits during childhood and youth are, in a sense, a part of preparing for parenthood. For better or worse, the health of the parent affects both the baby's health and the parents' ability to cope with the physical demands of caring for a tiny child.

Once they reach the childbearing age, many people start to think about having children — when to have them, or whether to have them at all. Some people find themselves unexpectedly expecting a baby.

MIXED FEELINGS

Once the baby is on the way, most people, even those who have wanted and planned for a baby, have mixed feelings. They may be:

Eager to start a family, but angry about interrupting a career

Excited about "showing," but depressed about being big and clumsy

Overjoyed to feel the baby move, but afraid of giving birth

Excited about being a father, but nervous about changing a lifestyle

Proud of being a parent, but feeling like a kid.

These feelings are normal, but they shock people who have been told only the joys and none of the anxieties of pregnancy. Sometimes these feelings put a strain on a couple's relationship.

On the other hand, it's possible for pregnancy to be a time when a couple feels closer than ever before. Their experience during pregnancy depends largely on how they prepare for their children and their new way of life.

TAKING CHARGE

When couples find out that they're expecting a baby, there's a lot they can do to meet the challenges and savor the joys that pregnancy brings:

Accept and Share Their Feelings

Pregnancy is a time when expectant parents need support — a chance to talk through their feelings with someone who cares. This could be a

spouse; a good friend; parents; or a professional, such as a doctor, marriage counselor, psychologist, or minister.

Learn About Pregnancy, Birth, and Parenthood

During childhood and up until the time of pregnancy, most people pick up general information about pregnancy, birth, and parenthood. When two people are about to become a father and mother, however, they need more specific information on each of these subjects.

Make Decisions Before the Baby Is Born

The months of pregnancy can be more than a time of waiting for the baby to be born. They can be a time for a couple to make important decisions about what they want their baby to experience at birth and afterward. Some of the decisions that most expectant couples face and some of the choices available to them are given on page 36.

When parents-to-be take advantage of these months to learn, to think about their values, and to clarify their feelings, they will find that:

Sharing their feelings helps resolve them.

Basic facts quiet fears, teach them about the developing child, and reveal the wonder of creation.

Learning about parenthood and children helps them become more confident and competent.

Making decisions prepares them better for the changes ahead.

They will be creating not just a child, but the kind of atmosphere and way of life they want for that child.

For Further Information...

Birth: Facts and Legends. Caterine Milinaire. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1974. (paperback)

The Hassles of Being a Teenage Parent. U. S. Public Health Service. Order from: Family Planning Clearinghouse, Box 2225, Rockville, Maryland 20852. (booklet)

Infant Care. U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Also available in Spanish. (booklet)

Our Bodies, Ourselves. The Boston Women's Health Book Collective, Inc. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971. (paperback)

Pregnancy: The Psychological Experience. Arthur and Libby Colman. New York: Bantam Books, 1971. (paperback)

Prenatal Care. U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Also available in Spanish. (booklet)

Preparing for Parenthood. Lee Salk. New York: Bantam Books, 1972. (paperback)

What Now? A Handbook for New Parents. Mary Lou Rozdilsky and Barbara Banet. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972. (paperback)

THE PROGRAM

Two To Get Ready

Characters:

Laura Riley — a young expectant mother

Hunter Riley — Laura's husband

Terri Lander — Laura's friend

Bill Bradley — Hunter's best friend

Drama:

While they hunt for eggs in the backyard, Laura tells Hunter that she's heard childbirth is painful. He brushes off her fear. She reminds him that childbirth classes start the next day, but he says he sees no need to attend them. Disappointed, Laura suggests they shop for baby clothes together. Hunter says he has to work. Laura suggests they go to a movie after dinner. Hunter says they can't afford it.

That night, Laura primps before the mirror and waits in bed for Hunter. She calls him to come and feel the baby move. For a moment, they laugh, but when Laura kisses him, Hunter says he has to turn off a light in the barn. She accuses him of not wanting to make love to her. He says he's afraid of hurting the baby.

The next morning, they argue again, and Hunter drives angrily off. When Terri arrives with a baby present, Laura pours out her troubles. Seeing the bare nursery and used baby clothing, Terri suggests that they go shopping. They buy a layette for the baby.

After work, at a bar, Hunter tells Bill that Laura is always nagging him. He feels that she doesn't appreciate how hard he is working and that she is more interested in the baby than in him. Bill invites two girls to drink and go to a drive-in with them. Hunter refuses to go. Bill says Hunter needs some fun and calls Laura a nag. Hunter defends Laura and his marriage, and leaves to look for Laura.

Meanwhile, Laura and Terri go to the childbirth class. Not finding Hunter, Laura decides to leave. They just miss Hunter, who enters in time to see the last moments of a natural childbirth film. Hunter is really moved, and rushes home to Laura, but he explodes when he sees the layette. Terri leaves quickly.

Later, Laura asks Hunter about the class and tries to explain why she bought the baby things. She tells him that she's scared. He acknowledges that they both have to get ready for the baby. For the first time, they begin to understand that each has been getting ready for the baby in his or her own way — but not together.

Documentary

Several couples attending a prenatal class led by a registered nurse express their feelings about the impending birth of their children. The parents-to-be describe the emotional changes they have gone through and forecast the responsibilities — and pleasures — that await them.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Display a few photographs or drawings of couples and their babies and single parents and their babies. Ask parents to comment on the following:

How do you prepare to be a parent?

Who needs the preparation?

When does the preparation begin?

OR

Write the statements given below on strips of paper and distribute them to the group. Ask parents to discuss the statements among themselves and tape the strips beneath one of two headings — "Truth" and "Myth" — written on a blackboard or large pad of paper. Then, as a total group, briefly review the two columns of statements.

Pregnant women glow with happiness.

Pregnancy makes a woman uninterested in the father of the child.

Preparation for being a parent begins when you are expecting a baby.

Couples who are expecting a baby always feel closer and happier than they ever did before.

Couples shouldn't have intercourse when the woman becomes pregnant because it will hurt the baby.

You learn all you need to know about being a parent from your own parents.

All members of a family need to get ready for the birth of a baby.

Preparation for parenthood begins in childhood.

It's natural for expectant parents to feel ambivalence (doubt as well as pleasure) before the child is born.

To Introduce the Theme...

Ask parents to keep in mind three questions as they view *Two To Get Ready*:

What do Laura and Hunter do to get ready for the baby?

What are some of the reasons Hunter and Laura are having problems?

What are the different ways Hunter and Laura try to resolve their feelings?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What did Laura and Hunter do to get ready for the baby?

What was Laura doing to get ready for the baby?

In what way was Hunter getting ready? From his point of view, what are the father's responsibilities during pregnancy?

What kind of preparation were they focusing on? What kind of preparation were they overlooking?

Comments: Laura and Hunter were preparing for the baby's birth in different ways. Both focused on physical preparation and seemed to overlook the psychological preparation needed as well. Laura tried to get the nursery ready and learn about childbirth. Hunter focused on earning and saving money.

What were some of the reasons Hunter and Laura were having problems?

What were some of the things that upset Hunter?

How do you think Hunter feels about becoming a father?

How did his feelings affect his relationship with Laura? Why didn't he want to make love to her?

How do you think Laura feels about having a baby? Why was she depressed and irritable?

What was keeping Hunter and Laura from better understanding each other's point of view? Were their problems typical of all expectant parents?

Comments: Like many expectant parents, Hunter and Laura have mixed feelings about having a baby and have been experiencing difficulty sharing their thoughts and feelings. This made them:

unable to appreciate each other's attempts to prepare for the baby

unable to help each other work through their fears and worries

unable to make important joint decisions, such as which baby items they could afford to buy and what method of childbirth they preferred.

What were the different ways Hunter and Laura tried to resolve their feelings?

How did Hunter try to deal with his feelings?

What were Laura's ways of coping with her feelings?

What finally brought Hunter and Laura together?

What's different about the way they got along at the end of the drama?

What did Hunter and Laura agree upon at the end of the program?

What are some of the decisions they still need to make?

Comments: Help parents recognize that Laura and Hunter's coping methods — such as talking with friends, getting involved in work, and fixing up the nursery — provided temporary relief and help for both expectant parents. When they really began to share their feelings with each other, they began to resolve their problems in a more permanent and meaningful way.

If Laura and Hunter had seen a film like this documentary, would it have reduced some of their tensions?

Do you think they would have had the same or similar anxieties? Is it possible to avoid anxieties and tensions when a baby is on the way?

Do you think they would have acted differently? In what way?

What did you learn from this documentary?

Comments: Despite preparation, most people still have some anxieties and tensions adjusting to pregnancy and the responsibilities of parenthood. Perhaps the awareness that parents gain from a film like this one will help them to recognize their feelings for what they are and to talk about them. Also, it may help expectant parents to know that their feelings of ambivalence are not unique to them, but are shared by almost all parents-to-be.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss their preparation for parenthood.

What did you learn about being a parent from your own parents?

What other experiences prepared you for parenthood?

When you learned you were expecting a baby, did you feel prepared?

Do you think anyone feels prepared?

How do you think your parents' example affected you? Do you still share many of your parents' attitudes? Do you do things the same way they did? How are you different?

How do you plan to prepare your own children for parenthood?

Comments: Encourage parents to reflect on their own preparation and growth as a parent. Help them to see what they have already

learned about being a parent, and to identify those areas where they still need information and help.

Ask fathers and mothers to share the feelings they had when they were expecting a baby.

When you were growing up, did you hear that pregnant women were supposed to act in any particular way? Judging from your own or your spouse's pregnancy, do you think the things you heard are true?

Mothers, what were some of the feelings that you had during pregnancy?

Fathers, what were your feelings during the pregnancy?

What were some of the successful ways you worked out your problems?

Comments: The purpose of these questions is to:

explore the range of feelings that parents experience when they're expecting a baby

discuss ways couples can resolve any problems that arise during pregnancy.

What information do expectant parents need?

What do you need to know about pregnancy? In what ways is this information helpful?

What do you think expectant parents need to know about *childbirth*?

What are the different methods of delivery?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

Which method did (or will) you choose?

What kinds of *medical care* should expectant parents be aware of?

What does prenatal care involve? When should it begin? Why is it important?

What about delivery services? Where did (or will) you give birth? What other options are available?

What does post-natal care involve? What kinds of medical and emotional needs do parents have once the baby is born?

What kinds of information about *child care* do expectant parents need? Where can they obtain that information?

Comments: These questions are designed so that parents, or parents-to-be, can share what they know and become aware of additional information. Make sure they know where they can find information and services in their community. Try to give as concrete and

practical suggestions as possible. For example, some parents may want to list things they can do to learn how to care for a child:

read books on child development

observe children of various ages in a child care center

babysit

talk to other parents

stop by the hospital nursery to see what newborns look like

attend a hospital class to learn how to bathe, feed and diaper a newborn.

You might also discuss the value of learning about pregnancy, birth and parenthood — how this knowledge affects parents' emotional as well as physical health.

What decisions do you need to make when you are expecting a baby?

List some of the decisions an expectant parent needs to make.

What choices did (or will) you make? How did they work out? What would you do differently another time?

Comments: Besides reviewing the decisions that need to be made, encourage parents to share the reasons for their choices. Some considerations that often enter into the decision-making process are:

cost

the impact on individual family members

personal philosophy

medical reasons

parents' skills, preferences, or temperament

personal contacts in the community

family tradition.

This would be an appropriate time to hand out copies of "The Deciding Factor" (see page 36).

How do you prepare your children for a new brother or sister?

When do you tell them that you are pregnant?

What do (or will) you say or do to prepare them for a new sibling and change in family life?

What do children need to know about conception, pregnancy and newborn babies? What kinds of questions do they ask about those subjects? What kinds of reassurance do they need?

How can you involve them in your own preparation for the baby? What can they do to get ready? How can they contribute?

Comments: Parents in your group will probably differ in the way they prepare for the birth of a new sibling. Their methods depend on such things as:

their attitudes toward sex education and the ease with which they share such information
the age of their children
the number of children already in the family
their children's interest in pregnancy and childbirth.

Here's how one couple prepared Daniel, their 4-year-old son:

We told Daniel that I was pregnant right away, as soon as we told our friends. Daniel had a right to know. Being open with him was a good idea, because he overheard a lot when we talked with our friends.

We gave him information when he asked questions. Our answers were simple, truthful, relaxed and as concrete as possible. For instance, we watched a real birth on TV with him. We showed him photographs of a growing fetus and had him feel the baby move. Some friends brought their baby to see him.

We tried to draw out Daniel's feelings about the new baby and at the same time reassure him that he had a special place in the family. We were careful not to give him special things to the baby. Often, friends gave a present to Daniel as well as to the new baby.

Daniel became quite involved in the preparations. For instance, he did Lamaze exercises beside us. He also took a trip to the hospital to see the nursery.

CHILDREN AND TV: WATCH IT!

Who is Sylvia?

Most young children spend more time watching TV than they do at any other activity except sleeping. In fact, by the time he or she graduates from high school, the average child will have spent 11,000 hours in school but 15,000 hours watching TV.

You can learn a lot in 15,000 hours. Indeed, children learn from TV all the time. A show does not have to be "educational" to teach. Children learn from all programs. The question is: for better or for worse?

The answer, to a large degree, depends on how parents guide their children's TV viewing.

THE BIG IDEAS

After parents, television is the most important teacher most children will have.

TV can encourage passivity, hostility, stereotyping, and the desire for material things in children.

TV can also teach new skills, encourage positive attitudes and behaviors, and provide children with experiences they have never had.

Whether TV helps or hinders children's growth depends on how parents use television in the home.

INTERFERENCE

The evidence that TV can be harmful to children cannot be denied. Numerous studies have shown that TV viewing can interfere with children's growth in the following ways:

TV Is a Passive Experience

Children learn by doing things. They need lots of physical, mental, and social activity — playing, reading, and talking with friends and family, but TV requires little participation on the part of children.

There Is Too Much Violence on TV

Studies have linked TV violence with aggressive behavior in children. It is also known that a daily diet of violence can lead children to think human life isn't valuable. Many people worry that TV is teaching children that aggression is the way to solve problems.

TV Stereotypes Women and Minorities

Men outnumber women on TV by about 3 to 1. When women do appear, they are much more likely than men to act foolishly or incompetently. Members of minority groups, too, are underrepresented and stereotyped on TV. This is particularly unfortunate because minority children tend to watch — and trust — TV even more than other children.

TV Is Too Commercial

American TV has far more advertising aimed at children than any other country in the world. Most of these commercials are for toys and sugared foods that many parents consider unnecessary and unhealthy.

TV Is Not Realistic

Most programs that children watch are really meant for adults, but children do not have the broad experience that adults have had. Children can't always tell the difference between what is real and what is make-believe. They believe what they see on the screen, and are easily misled.

FINE TUNING

But TV is not all bad. TV is an extraordinary invention that can enrich children's lives in the following ways:

TV Can Introduce Children to New Experiences

TV can broaden children's knowledge and interests. It can show them things they've never seen, places they've never been, things they've never done, and people they've never met.

TV Can Teach Children New Skills

Children can — and have — learned skills such as reading, counting, spelling, and problem solving through TV. They learn these skills through educational programs designed to teach these skills, as well as through regular programming.

TV Can Teach Children Healthy Attitudes Toward Themselves and Others

There are many good TV programs dealing with important feelings and situations, such as love, anger, birth, death, and divorce. Through such programs, children develop a better understanding of themselves and others.

TV Can Teach Children Behaviors All Parents Want Their Children To Learn

There are many programs — on both public and commercial TV — that offer examples of sharing, cooperation, courage, and self-control. Children imitate these behaviors as well as the violent ones they see.

FOCUSING THE PICTURE

TV is here to stay. Rather than waste time lamenting the harm that TV can do, it makes much more sense to build on the benefits of TV. Parents can turn TV to their advantage if they:

Become aware of what children are watching

Becoming familiar with what programs children watch and how they react to these programs is the first step in drawing up a plan for family viewing.

Plan children's viewing

There's no need to go to the extreme of forbidding TV viewing in the home. The other extreme — using TV as a babysitter — is not a good idea either. Parents may decide, though, to cut down on *how much* TV their children watch, or to be more selective about *what* their children watch.

Talk to children about what they watch

Studies show that children learn more when parents or older siblings view programs with them and talk about what is shown. If parents discuss undesirable behaviors and present other ideas, the negative influence of TV is sharply reduced.

Follow up TV viewing with active experiences

TV does not have to be a passive experience. When parents become involved in their children's viewing, almost any show can be turned into a learning experience.

For better or for worse — the choice is up to parents.

For Further Information...

How to Talk Back to Your Television Set. Nicholas Johnson. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970. (paperback)

The Incredible Television Machine. Lee Polk and Eda Leshan. New York: Macmillan, 1977.

The Family Guide to Children's Television. Evelyn Kaye. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974. (paperback)

New Season. The Positive Use of Commercial TV With Children. Rosemary Lee Potter. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1976. (paperback)

TV: The Family School. Edward Morris and Freida Gregory. Atlanta, Georgia: Avatar Press, 1976. (booklet)

The Early Window, Effects of Television on Children and Youth. Robert M. Liebert, John M. Neale, and Emily S. Davidson. New York: Pergamon Press, 1973. (paperback)

Watching can be a rich learning and social experience for your children. With a little help, you can turn what is not always a solitary experience into a chance for family members to learn and grow closer together. To add a healthy and human dimension to TV viewing in your home, try some of the following ideas:

Plan out when your children are watching.

For 1 week, keep a record of how many hours your children watch TV and when they watch.

Look out for sexual and racial stereotypes, excessive violence, and other behaviors your children might imitate.

Watch how your children react to what's on the screen. Are they excited? Bored? Confused?

Decide which kinds of programs they should watch, and how often.

Talk to children about what they watch.

Watch programs with your children whenever possible.

If you can't join them, let them know you're there to talk about a program or answer questions.

Ask children what they think about different shows, and encourage them to ask questions.

Don't be afraid to express your own likes and dislikes.

Talk about issues that come up on programs: the difference between make-believe and real life; TV characters and how they are like or unlike people you know; how violence can hurt people.

As children get older, help them become more aware of commercial appeals, stereotypes, and program messages.

Plan your children's TV diet.

On a daily or weekly basis, go over the TV Guide or a local program listing with your children and select programs for viewing.

If your children want to watch a show you think is inappropriate, explain what you don't like about it. Be gentle but firm in enforcing your limits.

Encourage children to watch a wide range of programs.

Provide children with lots of other activities besides watching TV.

Follow up TV viewing with active experiences.

Encourage children to draw or act out what they saw.

Have them make up a story about one of their favorite programs. Type it up and let them illustrate it.

Help them write letters — to stars, stations, and sponsors — asking questions and expressing opinions.

Play games to increase children's language skills — for example, look for a new word each day, or think of programs and characters that begin with different letters.

Follow up new information and take-aways with books and field trips.

Think up games like: describing a TV character and having others guess who it is; or imagining what certain characters would do if they appeared on different programs.

With older children, talk about how TV shows are made and produced. If possible, visit a TV studio or arrange for children to participate in a program.

THE PROGRAM

Who Is Sylvia

Characters:

Joe Sanchez — a young father

Maggie Sanchez — Joe's wife

Christina Sanchez — their 4-year-old daughter

Tio Daniel — Maggie's uncle

Cindy — Maggie's sister

Riche Morales — an 8-year-old boy

Senora Morales — Riche's mother

Ed Plunkett — Joe's partner

Drama:

As Joe and Ed drive Riche Morales home, Joe jokes with him about Omega Man, a TV super cop. Joe tells Riche he can be a super cop, too, if he watches TV and practices. A little later, Riche jumps off the roof of his house in an attempt to be like Omega Man.

Joe feels partly responsible, and when he returns home he pulls the TV plug out of the wall and announces that there will be no more TV viewing in the Sanchez home. Maggie persuades Joe to allow the TV to be on while Christina is asleep or out of the house.

Thus begins a nightly ritual in the Sanchez family: the adults wait impatiently for Christina to fall asleep so that the TV set can be turned on. The new rule is particularly troublesome for Maggie, who was in the habit of using the TV as a babysitter for Christina.

One day, when Maggie is trying to complete her ironing and Christina wants to be entertained, Maggie talks Tio Daniel into taking Christina to the Community Center with him. At the center, Christina and Tio Daniel watch a soap opera about a crippled girl named Sylvia who accidentally discharges a revolver. Tio Daniel talks to Christina about Sylvia's handicap and about how dangerous it is to play with guns. Guns must be carefully guarded, says Tio Daniel.

A little later, Joe is cleaning his own gun when Senora Morales calls to say that Riche is going to be all right. As Joe digests this news, Christina climbs up on the table and sits in front of Joe's gun. Thinking she is after the gun, Joe scolds her angrily. By talking further with Christina, though, Maggie finds out that Christina was really guarding the gun — a lesson she learned from Sylvia. Maggie and Joe agree that perhaps there are ways to use TV to benefit children.

Documentary:

Dr. Edward Palmer, Director of Research for the Children's Television Workshop, presents some of the studies that he has conducted on the influence of television on young children. He stresses the important role that parents need to play in interacting with their children as they view television.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

TV has been called a lot of names — everything from a "vast wasteland" to a "window on the world." Have parents discuss their own feelings about TV and debate the pro's and con's of this powerful medium:

What do you like about TV?

What don't you like about TV?

Are you aware of any particular effects of TV on children?

What do children learn from TV?

How do you feel about your children's TV viewing habits?

OR

Ask parents to consider the following facts about TV:

In the U.S., more homes have television sets than bathtubs, indoor plumbing, telephones, toasters, or any other appliance.

In large cities, water systems have had to be redesigned to handle heavy bathroom use during commercials.

Preschool children constitute the single heaviest viewing audience in the U.S.

Most young children spend more time watching TV than any other activity except sleeping.

Many preschoolers spend more time in front of the TV than it takes to get a college degree.

By the time he or she graduates from high school, the average child will have spent 11,000 hours in school and 15,000 hours watching TV.

Are parents surprised at this information? Ask them to discuss what these facts imply about the power of TV as a socializer of children.

If possible, have parents monitor their children's TV viewing during the week before this session. Have them keep a record of:

how many hours of TV their children watch daily

what programs their children watch

how their children react to what they watch.

Have parents share and discuss their findings with each other. Many may be surprised at how much time their children actually spend watching TV, or at the messages of some of their children's favorite programs.

To Introduce the Program...

Have parents keep in mind the following questions as they view *Who Is Sylvia?*:

What effects does TV have on various people in the film?

How do the adults influence what messages the children pick up?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What did the children in the film learn from watching TV?

What ideas did Riche Morales pick up?

Do you think that his jumping off the roof was far-fetched? Have you heard about similar incidents?

What were some of the things Christina learned from TV?

Was TV having any negative effects on Christina?

Do children tend to believe everything they see on TV?

Comments: Both Riche and Christina were ready learners of TV's messages. Like most young children, they believed that what they saw on the screen was true. Riche believed that Omega Man did indeed have super powers. Christina gave similar credence to Sylvia's words and actions. In fact, they both believed so strongly in what TV said that they followed up on what they learned with action: Riche tried to fly and Christina followed Sylvia's example.

Unfortunately, Riche's jumping off the roof is not a far-fetched example of the power of television. Many stories about children hurting themselves or other people in imitation of something they saw on TV have been reported.

How did adults influence what Riche and Christina learned from TV?

How might the powerful influence of TV that led to Riche's accident have been avoided? Who was responsible?

Do you think Maggie was aware of the need to guide Christina as she watched TV?

How did Tio Daniel influence what Christina learned from the soap opera about Sylvia? What might Christina have learned if Tio Daniel had not watched the program with her?

Comments: The messages that Riche and Christina picked up were partly the result of the nature of the programs they watched, and partly the result of the influence of adults. Because Tio Daniel talked to Christina about the soap opera, Christina was able to learn and apply a very positive lesson. Because Riche's parents did not discuss the programs he watched with him, he was unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy. When Joe encouraged Riche's faith in Omega Man, he unintentionally increased Riche's confusion about reality. By using the TV as a babysitter for Christina, Maggie, too, was leaving her child all alone to deal with the powerful influence of TV.

What do you think Maggie and Joe should do about TV viewing in their home?

Was Joe's solution to pull the plug a practical one? What were his motives in forbidding Christina to watch TV?

Was it realistic for the adults to watch TV and yet forbid Christina to view?

How important a role did TV seem to play in the lives of Maggie and Joe?

Do you think their lives would be enriched by changing their TV viewing habits?

What do you think would be a reasonable solution for the Sanchez family?

Comments: It does not seem likely that Joe's initial plan to ban TV viewing while Christina was around would have worked on a long-term basis. In the first place, by not allowing Christina to watch TV, yet watching it themselves, the adults were turning TV into a "forbidden fruit," a reward that comes with age. This might have magnified her desire to watch TV.

Cutting out TV altogether might work in some houses. In the Sanchez home, however, TV appears to be an important part of everyone's life. (Too much so, some parents may argue.) Rather than totally barring TV, then, it might be more practical for the Sanchez family to impose some limits but to accept TV viewing as a fact of life on which positive learnings can be built.

What advice would Dr. Palmer have given the Sanchez family?

What were the children in the documentary learning from TV?

How did the parents in the documentary involve themselves in their children's viewing?

Comments: Dr. Palmer pointed out two important ways in which TV can benefit children:

TV can enrich children's play by presenting a wide variety of roles and behaviors that children can imitate.

TV can broaden children's knowledge of the world by presenting stories about many different people, places and things.

Dr. Palmer would probably have advised Maggie and Joe that by talking to Christina about what she saw on TV, they could build positive lessons out of even such potentially dangerous programs as Omega Man. They could, for example, compare what took place on the screen with what happens in real life.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss the role that TV plays in their own homes.

How important would you say TV is to your family?

Do you regulate your children's viewing in any way?

Would you like to change your family's viewing habits? How?

Comments: Despite the fact that TV is such a powerful and potentially harmful force, most parents never stop to think about how it may be affecting their families. One survey, for example, has shown that 78% of all parents use TV as a babysitter. This indicates a great lack of awareness about the dangers of abandoning children to the TV set. Hopefully, this discussion will encourage parents to start thinking about how to take control of TV and turn it to their advantage.

How can TV harm children?

Are you concerned about what messages your children are picking up from TV? About what they may be missing by watching TV?

Do you feel there is too much violence on TV? How does televised violence affect your children?

How do you feel about the commercials on children's TV programming? Do they advertise products you want your children to have? Have your children ever tried to persuade you to buy them something they'd seen advertised on TV?

Do you think TV tends to stereotype people? Who does it stereotype? What might some of the effects of these stereotypes be?

Comments: Children who view television to the exclusion of other activities may suffer from passivity and even sleeping problems. Studies have also shown that a steady diet of TV can stifle children's imagination. Some teachers of young children claim that children's play is less imaginative than in the past, and that children today have a low tolerance for the frustration of learning.

Another cause for concern is the relationship between televised violence and aggressive behavior in children. Extensive research has confirmed that children can and do learn aggressive behavior from

what they see on the TV screen. Viewing antisocial acts on TV can make children irritable and more likely to pick a fight with other family members. In some cases, it can even stimulate children to imitate the behaviors they see.

Other people claim that TV commercials are making salespeople out of their children. Program sponsors spend a small fortune making their commercials appealing so that children will persuade their parents to buy the products they advertise. To the regret of many parents, however, many of these child-directed commercials are for what parents think of as "junk food." In fact, more than 70% of the commercials on the Saturday and Sunday morning children's programs are for sugar-coated cereals, candy, and gum.

Finally, many people maintain that the roles in which women and members of minority groups are portrayed are distorted and don't reflect what these people are really like. Since TV helps to shape children's view of what the world is really like and what roles they should play in it, these stereotypes can limit children's interaction with other people.

How can parents lessen the harm and build on the benefits of TV?

Have your children learned any useful skills or positive behaviors from TV?

Do the benefits of TV outweigh the bad?

Do children learn only from "educational" programs?

Should children's TV viewing be regulated? How?

How can you be sure children are learning something positive from a TV program?

Comments: To a large degree, the influence of television on children — for good or for bad — depends on how parents participate in their children's viewing. When parents become involved in their children's viewing, almost any show can be turned into a learning experience. For example, if a commercial program came on that showed women in an unfavorable light, a parent might say:

Do you know any mothers who act like that? Why do you suppose they made those women look so silly?

A violent cartoon might provide an opportunity to comment:

Roadrunner didn't get hurt when that man pushed him off the cliff because this is just make-believe. If that happened to a real person, the person would have been really hurt, right?

Have parents recall some of the disturbing things they have seen on TV, and talk about how they turned — or could have turned — these into opportunities to increase children's critical viewing skills.

You might also hand out copies of "Channeling Your Children's Viewing" (page 48) and have parents discuss which of these techniques parents have used, how they worked out, and what other strategies parents would feel comfortable trying. If time permits, try to come up with some additional TV games that parents could play with their children.

What can parents do to improve TV programming for their children?

What changes would you like to see made in children's programming?

What can be done to bring about these changes?

Do you know of any groups that are working in this area?

Comments: TV broadcasters are required by law to be responsive to viewers. There are many ways in which parents can make known their views on TV programming. For example, they can write letters or make phone calls to local newspapers, TV stations, networks, sponsors, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission. Broadcasters *have* changed or dropped programs when the response has been loud enough.

Parents can also become involved in groups that are trying to do something about children's TV programming. One of the most outspoken and effective of such groups is Action for Children's Television (46 Austin Street, Newtonville, Mass. 02160). If time allows, write to ACT or a similar group in your community for information on their activities, and share this information with parents.

DEALING WITH DEATH: THE TIME IS NOW

And We Were Sad, Remember?

Death is one of the few things in life we can count on. Sooner or later we will all die. It's just a matter of time.

But even though death cannot be escaped, our society tries to deny — even defy — this final phase of life. We don't even like to use the word "dead." Instead, we say: He "went away" or "departed" or "passed on" or "expired." Maybe we think that by avoiding the subject, death will go away.

It won't, of course.

THE BIG IDEAS

Because it is a part of life, parents need to help children understand and accept death.

Shielding children from death tends to confuse them and deprive them of their right to mourn.

Introducing children to the idea of death early in life, and answering their questions honestly, prepares children to deal with death when it happens.

DEATH CANNOT BE CONCEALED

The subject of death is persistently avoided in our culture. Many parents are particularly hesitant to discuss death with young children. Perhaps they think that children are not able to understand and talk about death. Or, they may want to shield children from this painful experience for as long as possible. Maybe they think they can do this by not mentioning the subject, or by ignoring children's questions, or by "beating around the bush."

They can't, of course.

Death cannot be hidden from children, for death is always around us. One day Grandpa may not return from the hospital. A favorite pet may be hit by a car. A funeral procession may pass by, or a public figure may be assassinated. And, of course, every day TV newscasters report death in "living" color on the family television set.

Children are aware of death from an early age. They are willing and even eager to talk about it. They know when something is wrong, and they want to understand what it means.

When parents ignore children's questions, or "beat around the bush," they only confuse them. They leave children all alone to find their own explanations for what has happened.

This can make death very frightening to children. A child who is told that Aunt Sally "just went to sleep" may become afraid of going to sleep. Left with the explanation that Grandpa "went away," a child may worry that he or she did something to make Grandpa leave, or feel rejected because Grandpa never said good-bye. Children are always scared by secrecy and mystery.

When parents try to shield children from death, they also deprive them of their right to mourn. Like other human emotions, sorrow needs to be expressed. Mourning the death of a relative or pet gives children a chance to grow and come to terms with pain and death. These are important experiences that no parent would want to deny children.

LIVING WITH DEATH

Instead of trying to protect children from death, then, parents should help them to prepare for it. Nothing parents can say will ever make death painless for children, but with honesty and support parents can make it easier for children to deal with death.

Exactly what parents say to children about death will depend on many things. The parents' own feelings about death, their religious beliefs, and the developmental level of their children will all influence

what parents tell them. There are, however, a few guidelines that can be useful to all parents in talking with children about death:

Introduce Children to the Idea of Death Early in Life

It is better to start discussing death with children when they are young than to wait until they are actually confronted with it. Then, when a death actually occurs, children will be better prepared to cope with it.

Be Honest and Straightforward in Explanations of Death

Parents should not overwhelm children with details about death. Giving a child too much information can be as confusing as too little. Parents help most when they talk to children honestly, but at their level.

Encourage Children to Express Their Feelings About Death

When children experience the death of someone they love, they react in many different ways — just like adults. Parents should encourage children to express their emotions — through talking, playing, or whatever activity serves the individual child's needs. Parents also help children to work through their feelings of grief when they let children know that they, too, are sad and troubled.

Remember That Young Children's Initial Understanding of Death Is Not Complete

Very young children are not able to understand the finality of death. They tend to view death as merely a separation, or a state of being less alive. This does not mean that parents shouldn't talk to young children about death. Children will take in what information they can, and gradually their understanding of death will deepen.

Death is a fact of life that children — like all of us — can learn to live with.

For Further Information...

Death Be Not Proud: A Memoir. John Gunther. New York: Harper and Row, 1949. (paperback)

A Death in the Family. James Agee. New York: Avon, 1959. (paperback)

Death, The Final Stage of Growth. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975. (paperback)

Explaining Death to Children. Earl A. Grollman, ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967. (paperback)

On Death and Dying. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. New York: Macmillan, 1969. (paperback)

Talking About Death, A Dialogue Between Parent and Child. Earl A. Grollman. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970. (paperback)

Why I think that is better than thinking of the idea of death even before someone they love has died. It's important — like the death of a plant or pet — can help you to learn how to deal with death and that some things cannot be changed. When people learn about death through such experiences, they are better able to cope with death when it comes.

How has your mother used this kind of event to help her 4-year-old daughter understand death?

"Well, she said, 'Daddy died.'"

"Died? What does that mean? He died. He won't ever get up again."

"Yes, Daddy died."

"What does that mean?"

"Daddy died," said Fido, who stopped bawling, and his hair has stopped being so shiny. He won't ever be able to move again."

"What does that mean?"

"Daddy died," said Fido, who stopped bawling, and his hair has stopped being so shiny. He won't ever be able to move again."

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THE PROGRAM

And We Were Sad, Remember?

Characters:

Amos Sandburg — a young father

Jeannie Sandburg — Amos' wife

Allison — their 5-year-old daughter

Christopher — their 2½-year-old son

Marian -- Amos' sister

Catherine and Connie — Marian's children

Drama:

Amos' mother has died, and Amos phones Jeannie early in the morning to tell her. Allison watches the sorrow on Jeannie's face, and cuddles up to her for comfort. Jeannie answers Allison's questions about what happened, and gives her the choice of going to the funeral or staying at home. Allison wants to go to the funeral.

When Amos tells his sister, Marian, that Jeannie is bringing the children, Marian persuades Amos to call Jeannie and ask her to leave the children at home. Jeannie insists that the children have a right to come.

At Marian's house, Amos and Marian receive friends while Allison and Catherine play "death." Allison argues with Catherine about whether or not dying is like sleeping, and runs out to confirm with Amos that you can't breathe when you're dead. Amos is uncomfortable about Allison's questions and shepherds the children off to bed.

The next day, Amos and Marian visit their mother's apartment. They appear awkward and uneasy. Marian wants Amos to tell Jeannie not to bring Allison and Christopher to the funeral. Irritably, Amos agrees.

That night, Catherine keeps everyone awake crying because she is scared to go to sleep. Amos accuses Jeannie of upsetting Catherine by talking about death and tells Jeannie that the children are not to go to the funeral. Angry and frustrated, Jeannie insists that Amos be the one to tell the children. Amos tries to do this at the playground the next day, but the children's obvious desire to attend the funeral stops him.

Amos and the children join Jeannie and Marian at Mrs. Sandburg's apartment. Amos is on edge. When Marian tries to draw him into an argument about whether or not the children are too young

to deal with death, Amos points out that Allison and Christopher are dealing better with their grandmother's death than he is. He goes into the other room, where Allison and Christopher are talking about their grandmother and interacting with her things. Touched, he sinks into a chair with tears in his eyes. Allison and Christopher comfort him, and Allison explains that it's OK for Daddy to cry, because he is sad.

Documentary:

Children explain what death means to them and what they think happens when a person dies. Two mothers tell how they helped their children deal with the deaths of their fathers.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Have parents discuss the reluctance of people in our society to talk about death:

Is death a taboo subject in this country? If so, what might some of the reasons be?

Can you think of specific examples of how people avoid this subject — particularly with children?

Has the process of death become isolated from the rest of our lives? If so, what effects has this had?

Point out that until the early part of this century, death was a natural part of family life in this country. Death, like birth, usually happened in the home, in the presence of the whole family. Few children grew up without seeing death take place. Today, however, when death does take place, it is usually in the hospital, far away from the eyes of children. The body is then taken to a funeral parlor to be prepared for burial. As we have come to see less of death, so have we begun to talk less about it.

Some parents may also suggest that the reluctance to talk about death is connected with the youth orientation of our society. Just as we try to hide our wrinkles and age, so we try to conceal death.

OR

Ask parents how they feel about discussing death with children:

Is it important to talk about death with young children?

Do you feel comfortable doing this?

What do young children need to know about death?

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to look for answers to the following questions as they view *And We Were Sad, Remember?*:

*In what different ways do the adults in the film cope with death?
How do the children deal with the death of their grandmother?*

AFTER THE PROGRAM

How did the adults in the film differ in their views on dealing with death?

How did Amos react to the death of his mother? How did Marian deal with it? Jeannie?

How did Jeannie and Marian differ in the way they talked to their children about death and prepared them for it?

Was it easier for Jeannie to deal with Mrs. Sandburg's death because she wasn't her parent? How do you think Jeannie would have reacted if it had been her mother who died?

Do you think Jeannie went overboard involving her children in the observance of death?

What brought about the change in Amos' attitude toward dealing with death?

Comments: In the beginning of the film, Amos repressed his feelings of grief about his mother's death. He concentrated on holding himself together and throwing himself into tasks concerned with the death. He was uncomfortable talking about death with his children and evaded their questions. It was only by observing how well Allison and Christopher handled their grandmother's death and the effect on Catherine of shielding her from death that Amos began to reconsider his position.

Marian, like her brother, has trouble dealing openly with death. She believes that children can best be served by protecting them from death's pain and sadness, and so she excluded them from the funeral and told them that death is just like sleeping.

Jeannie, on the other hand, does not disguise her feelings — either with herself or with her children. She was not afraid to cry or express her sorrow in front of them. She answered all their questions simply but honestly, and let them participate in the observance of death to the extent they wanted and were able.

How did Allison's reactions to her grandmother's death differ from Catherine's?

What do you think were some reasons for their different reactions?

What were Allison's ideas about death? Catherine's?

Do you think Allison really had an accurate concept of death? Or was she just parroting her mother's words?

Did Allison handle the idea of death well? Or was she obsessed with the subject?

Why do you think Catherine was too scared to go to sleep at night?

Comments: Allison appeared to deal very well with her grandmother's death. She was able to ask questions about the things that puzzled her and talk about death with her parents and cousins. She even expressed her understanding of death in play acting. She wanted to be included in all the activities relating to the funeral and the packing up of Grandma's house. Rather than being obsessed with the subject of death, Allison was trying to understand what the finality of death means.

Allison's cousin Catherine, on the other hand, was having trouble dealing with the death of her grandmother. Even though she is older than Allison, her level of understanding does not approach Allison's. She has been confused by the euphemisms she's heard from her mother. Having been told that dying is just like sleeping, for example, she was afraid to go to sleep for fear that she, too, would fall asleep forever.

Should the Sandberg children be allowed to attend their grandmother's funeral?

How do you think Allison would react to the funeral? Christopher? Catherine?

Do you think the children would be upset when they saw the casket? Is there an age at which a child is too young to attend a funeral?

If Amos and Jeannie agree to let the children attend the funeral, how should they prepare them for this event?

What would you do in this situation?

Comments: Some parents assume that a funeral is too painful an experience for their children. Many authorities, however, feel that even young children should be allowed to attend funerals — if they so desire. Funerals are sad, but they provide an opportunity to say goodbye and to accept the finality of death, and children are not strangers to unhappy feelings.

Parents can prepare children for funerals by talking about their purpose, how they make people feel, and what happens at them. When children understand what is going on, they are more comfortable and relaxed.

What were the different ways the parents in the documentary helped their children deal with death?

What is the difference between talking to children about death before a parent dies and at the time it happens?

How much were the children in the documentary able to understand about death?

Comments: Most young children, like those in the documentary and like Allison and Christopher, are quite capable of understanding and talking about death. In fact, death is a subject commonly on their minds. One study by psychologist Maria Nagy demonstrated that three questions about death recur in children's minds: What is death? What makes people die? What happens to people when they die?

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss their own experiences with death.

Can you remember your first encounter with death?

How did your parents explain it to you?

How did you feel about it?

What helped you most?

How did you react to subsequent experiences with death?

Comments: Parents' first experiences with death may have been with a relative, friend, or pet. Encourage them to try to remember how they were affected by the reactions of adults to the death, and what helped them most in understanding and dealing with the situation.

Ask members of the group to talk about their own feelings about death.

Do you ever think about death?

Do you talk about it with your family and friends?

Do you feel comfortable talking about it? Why or why not?

Comments: Parents are better able to help their children understand and cope with death when they have worked through their own feelings and anxieties about this subject. It is to be hoped that this discussion will help parents begin to explore and express their own feelings about death.

How have parents seen young children react to death?

How much do you think young children are capable of understanding about death?

How does their understanding increase with age?

What are some of the different ways children react to death?

How do you think their reactions are affected by the attitudes of the adults around them?

Comments: Most children encounter death at some point in their early years. Most often this happens when a grandparent or pet dies. The responses of children to such deaths may run a wide gamut. They may deny what has happened, or protest its unfairness. They may be angry at the dead person for leaving them, or blame themselves for doing something that made the person die. They may cry, despair, or withdraw. Or, they may go from despair one moment to a carefree mood the next.

Some children may stage elaborate funerals for a dead pet, or play "death" or "funeral," like Allison. These may seem to be strange games for little children, but they are actually very healthy ways for children to work out what they have seen or imagined.

Some children may even seem to have no response at all. This lack of response may trouble adults. The finality of death can't be understood, however, until a child is old enough to have a clear sense of present and future time. This generally starts to take place around the age of 5.

Ask parents to discuss how they can help prepare children to deal with death.

When should such preparation begin?

What opportunities exist in daily life to talk about death?

Comments: Many daily experiences provide opportunities to introduce and discuss the idea of death. The death of a plant, for example, can help get across the idea of the rhythm of life and the notion that — unlike a broken toy — some things cannot be fixed.

The death of a pet can be a good time for children to work through feelings of grief. When this happens, parents should not rush out and buy children a new pet. By waiting a while, they let children learn and grow from one of their first encounters with the sorrow of losing something dear to them.

Television programs are another opportunity to talk about death. In fact, many people believe that it is particularly important to discuss with children the image of death that is presented on TV. For the most part, the picture of dying portrayed on TV does not convey the suffering, pain, or permanence involved. Books written for children on death offer parents another way to introduce this subject. If possible, bring in copies of one or more such books and discuss how they might be used with children.

You might also hand out copies of the conversation between a mother and her daughter in "The Time to Tell" (page 59). Ask parents to react to this conversation: What did Jennifer want to know about death? How did her mother respond to her questions? Was Jennifer able to understand her mother's answers? Was she upset by her

mother's explanation of death? Point out how the mother answers all her daughter's questions honestly, but doesn't burden her with more information than is requested.

You could also have parents discuss different ways to respond to questions that children typically ask about death: What does dead mean? Why do people die? How does it feel to die? Where do you go when you die? Will I die, too? What happens to you in the ground?

How can a parent help children deal with the death of the other parent?

What special problems does the death of a parent pose?

Have any of you had to deal with this situation? How did you handle it?

Comments: One out of twenty children faces the death of a parent during childhood. The loss of a parent is especially hard on children. Their world may never be as secure again. They may react with guilt (that they did something to cause the death) or fear (that the other parent will leave them, too).

Helping a child deal with the death of a parent is very hard for the remaining parent, too. He or she may be overwhelmed by painful feelings. The parent has to work through these feelings, and at the same time give the child emotional support and reassurance that life goes on. Parents deal best with this difficult situation when they are open with their own feelings, find outlets for their emotions, and seek the comfort and help of friends.

ATTACHMENT AND INDEPENDENCE: YOU CAN'T HAVE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER

Love Me and Leave Me

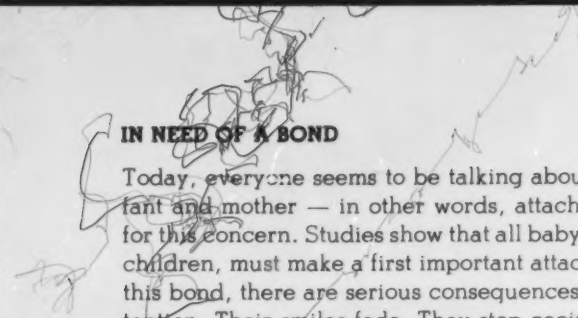
It may sound contradictory, but the closer we are to someone, the more readily we can accept being temporarily separated from that person. When a relationship becomes very strong, both people feel more secure, since there is less worry and fewer demands to prove one's love. This security allows both children and adults to function independently without fear of being abandoned. Their confidence in each other enables them to seek friendships with other people.

THE BIG IDEAS

Babies form a special attachment or bond with the people who respond to their calls for food, comfort and attention in a consistent and loving way.

A strong attachment to their parents gives children the security to become independent and reach out to other people.

There are things that parents can do to make inevitable separations less upsetting to their children.



IN NEED OF A BOND

Today, everyone seems to be talking about the bond between the infant and mother — in other words, attachment. There's good reason for this concern. Studies show that all baby animals, including human children, must make a first important attachment to an adult. Without this bond, there are serious consequences. Babies stop calling for attention. Their smiles fade. They stop cooing. They don't reach out to other people. They may even fail to gain weight. This first bond of love and affection affects a child's total development.

Let's look at how this bond is formed.

A BOND IS BORN

At first babies know nothing of their parents or their love. All faces look the same.

However, without knowing it, babies begin to build a special bond with their parents. They cry. They startle. They stretch and wiggle. Their hands and feet speak as well as their faces. When babies act in these ways, parents want to respond.

Gradually, parents become able to "read" and respond to their babies' needs. They learn what those squirms and stretches mean. They learn to interpret different cries. They discover just how their babies like to be held, stroked, and talked to.

At the same time, babies learn to recognize their parents' special touch, smell, and voices. They begin to associate their parents with feeling comfortable and secure. When they cry, they can rely on their parents to come and try to help. Parents may not be able to relieve all discomfort, but what counts is that they are there *trying*. Gradually, babies begin to love and trust their parents.

Once babies feel sure of their parents, they don't need to be so demanding. Moreover, a strong attachment to their parents gives these children the security and confidence to form ties with other people.

LETTING GO IS HARD TO DO

Although a strong attachment to parents helps children to let go when the time comes, the first separations are never easy. During their first three years most children can't bear to let their parents leave them. When parents leave, the baby may cry as if she's been abandoned forever. The toddler clings to his mother when she reaches for her coat. These children may not realize yet that their parents still exist when they are out of sight.

Little by little, though, children work through these fears. For instance, babies play peek-a-boo to make parents disappear and appear again. Toddlers may play in a room adjoining the one where their parents are and check back occasionally for a reassuring kiss or hug.

EASING THE PAIN

Parents can ease their children's fears, and make the road to independence smoother, when they:

Prepare children for separations

When children are prepared for a separation, they are less afraid of being abandoned.

Provide a consistent routine that children can count on

Most adults feel more secure when they know what is going to happen next. Children need a routine even more.

Get them used to new people gradually

Children feel more secure when they know and trust their caregivers.

Encourage children to act out their fears

Expressing their fear of separation helps children resolve it.

Let children take something familiar to a new place

This may make the separation seem less final.

Separations need not be a nightmare for parents and child; separations can even add to the bond between them. When they have built a strong and secure relationship, parent and child can become totally involved in new and challenging experiences. This may give them more to share when they come together again.

For Further Information . . .

- Infants and Mothers.* T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1969. (paperback)
- The Magic Years.* Selma Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969. (paperback)
- Oneness and Separateness: From infant to Individual.* Louis J. Kaplan. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978.
- Preparing for Change.* Caring for Children series, No. 3. Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (booklet)
- The Roots of Love.* Helene S. Arnshein. New York: Bantam Books, 1975. (paperback)
- Who Cares for the Baby? Choices in Child Care.* Beatrice Marden Glickman and Nesha Bass Springer. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.

MANAGING SEPARATIONS EASILY

All of us find it hard to separate from those we love. For children, learning to say good-bye is one of the most difficult adjustments to have to make. How you handle their first separations, then, is of the utmost importance. Here are some ways you can help your children meet this challenge.

Prepare children for separations

Talk to children beforehand about where you are going and why: "Mommy is going to work and Mommy is going to take care of you every day." Occasional separations, such as an evening out, require the same kind of preparation. Never sneak away from a child.

Provide a consistent routine that children can count on

If you work, it is easier for young children to let go of you if you leave at roughly the same time every day. You might arrange for a special activity just before you leave. You could read a story or play a record; for instance, Children need to know when they can expect you to return: "...when you wake up," or "...when Daddy comes home after dark." This lessens children's feelings that they have been abandoned.

Get them used to new people gradually

Whenever possible, leave children with someone you know. You can invite the babysitter to visit once or twice before the sitter stays alone with the child. Or you can spend a day or so at the day care center with your child before the child stays there alone.

Children feel more secure when they know and trust the grown-ups who are taking care of them, but trust takes time to grow. Children gain trust when they see that you like and trust their new caregiver. It's easier to get to know someone new when children are in the security of their own home or when you are safely nearby.

Changes are hard on children. Try to keep a few regular people caring for your child. This does not mean that children should be left with unsuitable people; however, even if they are friends.

Encourage children to get out their fears

Acting out the separation helps children feel in control. Playing "peek-a-boo" or "hide-and-seek" helps them see that you reappear after you disappear. Pretending to be a parent who packs a suitcase and goes on a trip helps the children to understand that people do return. Help your children understand that "good-bye" doesn't mean "forever."

Let children take something familiar to a new place

Children need to take something of their own to a new place. A blanket or toy that reminds them of you and their home may help them feel safer in strange places, or you can let them keep something important that belongs to you — a pair of gloves or a purse, for example.

THE PROGRAM

Love Me and Leave Me

Characters:

Sheila Hornbrenner — a young mother

Bob Hornbrenner — Sheila's ex-husband

April Hornbrenner — Sheila and Bob's 18-month-old daughter

Bonnie Hornbrenner — Bob's mother

Maeve Caruso — April's day care teacher

Gentry Vashon — a 6-month-old baby at Crowther

Rita Vashon — Gentry's mother

Drama:

The night before April's first day at Crowther Day Care Center, Sheila and Bob talk on the phone. Sheila shares her feelings about April starting day care, and Bob explains his plans for taking April to his family reunion that weekend. Before April goes to sleep that night, Sheila helps her choose a favorite toy to take with her the next day.

On the big day, Sheila brings April and some of her favorite things to the toddler classroom at Crowther. Maeve greets them and takes April. Sheila stays for a short while to help April adjust. April seems content until Sheila slips out of the room. Then April starts crying. The same thing happens when Sheila leaves for work.

Later on Sheila tells Maeve her concern that April is having difficulty adjusting to the center. Sheila wonders why Gentry has adjusted so easily. She worries that she is making the situation worse by giving April lots of attention at home. Maeve assures Sheila that April's fears are normal. She says that giving April lots of attention will make her feel more secure and help her to separate more easily.

That night Sheila calls Bob and expresses her concern that it may be a bad time for April to leave home for two days. Disappointed, Bob asks her not to make a final decision until they talk some more.

Sheila starts coming to the center a couple of hours before it opens to spend some time alone there with April. She talks with Maeve about her conversation with Bob, and Maeve is sympathetic to Sheila's concerns. Bob also goes to the center to see how April is doing and to talk with Maeve. Gradually, he realizes that April needs to stay with her mother that weekend.

Documentary:

Dr. Bettye Caldwell talks about the process of bonding that takes place between parents and infants. She explains that when children receive

consistent caregiving, they learn to trust and depend on their caregiver. With this trust, children also begin to feel confident enough to allow their caregiver to leave. Independence is the outgrowth of attachment. Dr. Caldwell states that anyone who allows a child to become attached to him or her has a responsibility to that child.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Give parents the quiz below:

True or False?

☐☐

A baby who is very attached to either or both parents is likely to become overly dependent on them.

☐☐

Spoiling results when parents pick up a baby frequently.

☐☐

By ignoring a baby's cries, parents are "building character" and making their child more independent.

☐☐

If parents always respond to a baby's demands for food, comfort and attention, the baby becomes even more demanding.

While each of the above statements is commonly believed, they are all false. Discuss how misconceptions such as these might have developed.

OR

Discuss how parents feel when they have to leave their children for the first time:

How do you feel about these first separations?

How do you think your children feel about them?

Is there any way to ease the pain of separation? To avoid it altogether?

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind these questions as they view *Love Me and Leave Me*:

Is April having a hard time adjusting to day care?

How do Sheila and Maeve help April feel more secure?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Do you think April was having a hard time adjusting to the day care center?

What were some of the things that could have been upsetting April? Are April's fears typical of children her age? Why was Gentry "ready" but not April? Do girls take a longer time to become independent?

Comments: Parents may give several reasons for April's difficulty in adjusting to the center:

Most children April's age worry about losing their mothers. They have to learn that things and people exist even when they are out of sight.

April's limited understanding of time may make her anxious about when her mother will return.

April may be the kind of child who takes longer to accept new places and people.

Her parents' divorce may make her a bit more insecure about separations.

Gentry's and April's reactions to day care may have differed because:

Different children react in very different ways.

Separation fears peak at different times for different children.

Gentry and April may be affected by their mothers' feelings. Rita is more relaxed than Sheila.

Gentry may be more accustomed to meeting new adults and children.

Gentry is much younger than April, and at 6 months of age separation anxiety is not as common.

How did Sheila and Maeve help April feel more secure at Crowther?

How did Sheila prepare April for the day care center? Did it help?

How would you prepare a young child like April for a separation or new experience? How would you prepare an older child?

Once April started day care, what did Sheila do to help her adjust?

What else could she have tried?

What did Maeve do to help April adjust?

Comments: It's difficult to prepare children April's age for a new experience because they have difficulty understanding and measuring time, and they can't picture an experience they've never seen.

In time, however, young children begin to think ahead and imagine new experiences. Preparation helps them cope with change.

The older the child, the more active he or she can be in getting ready — choosing a favorite toy to take or marking time on a calendar, for example. Sheila tried to prepare April by:

talking with her the night before
gathering some of April's toys and clothing to take to the center with April.

During the next few days, Sheila tried to help April adjust by:

bringing April's things to the center
staying in the classroom with April to help her get used to the new place and new people gradually
playing hiding games with April's bathtub toys to help her act out her fears about being left
giving April plenty of love and attention to make her feel secure.

Maeve helped Sheila and Bob understand and meet April's emotional needs, and she was understanding and somewhat affectionate toward April. By keeping in mind the whole family, not just the child, a caregiver can be more sensitive to the needs of the child. Parents may want to discuss a caregiver's responsibility to parents in greater detail.

What were April's needs after her first week in day care?

Why did Sheila want to keep April home for the weekend?
Would meeting relatives at Bob's family reunion have helped April to separate from Sheila and become more independent?
Can a child April's age be equally attached to both parents?
Do you agree or disagree with the decision to keep April at home with Sheila for the weekend? Were Sheila and Bob being too careful?

Comments: Sheila and — eventually — Bob believed that April needed her familiar environment, routine and caregiver (Sheila) during the weekend. They thought this would help April feel more secure and separate more easily on Monday.

It's perfectly possible for a young child to form a strong bond with more than one person, provided that both adults share child care responsibilities on a daily basis. Today, more fathers are spending part of their day as caregivers for their children. Although Bob takes care of April on certain weekends and visits her often, he does not share child care duties on a regular basis. Maeve Caruso, however, has become one of April's main caregivers.

Have parents discuss the implications of Dr. Caldwell's statement in the documentary that, when children become attached to adults, those adults have a special responsibility to provide a secure and dependable environment and consistent love and affection.

What does it mean to provide a secure environment for a young child?
What are some of the problems and pressures you encounter as you try to provide this kind of environment?

How does your child's dependency on you make you feel?

Is it possible to provide an environment that helps the child feel secure but also encourages him or her to become independent?

Comments: Some people feel that keeping furniture arranged in the same way and maintaining the same routine provide a secure and consistent environment for children. While these are part of providing consistency and make it easier for children to feel at home, children are more dependent on the familiarity of their caregivers.

Studies show that children need a consistent person who loves them and takes care of them. Without this special person, children may fail to develop. Such children have been found in orphanages or other institutions where a number of different people care for each child. They might also be children whose parents never have time for them and entrust them to a changing series of caregivers.

Make sure that parents understand that a secure environment allows children to become independent.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss the ways they build a close bond with their children.

When does the bond between parent and baby form?

How do you build a bond with your baby?

What are some signs that your child is becoming attached to you?

If your baby becomes attached to you, will he or she become spoiled?

How does this bond between you and your child change as you grow older?

Comments: Some parents worry that they will spoil their babies by being responsive to them. However, studies show that babies whose parents respond quickly and consistently to their cries during the first few months cry less later on than babies whose parents ignore their cries during the early months. Once babies feel sure of their parents, they don't need to be so demanding. Attachment makes independence possible.

Some signs of attachment are:

the baby stops crying when the caregiver appears

the baby looks at the caregiver, recognizes him or her, and smiles

the baby coos and babbles when the caregiver appears but cries or becomes silent at the sight of a stranger.

Have parents discuss finding child care for children.

What kinds of child care are available in your community? Which kind of child care is best for your child?

If you have a choice, how do you decide at what age your child is ready to separate from you? Is one age easier or better for the child than any other?

What do you take into consideration when you choose a new caregiver? What kind of person do you look for?

What are some of the difficulties of evaluating a caregiver? How can they be overcome?

Comments: Currently, there is concern among parents, child psychologists, and educators about whether children should be separated from their parents for extended periods of time before the age of 3. Different points of view on this issue are:

Separation erodes the bond between parent and child. For this reason, parents should wait until children are 2 or 3 before placing them in another person's care on a regular basis.

Separation doesn't necessarily hurt the bond; the quality of interaction between parent and child when they are together is more important than how much time the parent spends with the child. Therefore, if a parent feels confined and unhappy at home, it might be best for both child and parent if the child is placed in another person's care for some of the time. Of course, many parents have no choice; they have to work.

Fortunately, children don't need parents every minute. However, because there is so much dispute about when children are ready to separate from their parents, many parents feel guilty or worry when they put their child in another person's care. For this reason, it may be helpful for parents to discuss their feelings about separating from their children.

Have parents share ways they help their children with separations.

How do children of different ages react to separations?

Have you noticed any ways your children try to work through their fears of separation on their own?

How do you help them say good-bye?

How do you help them form ties with new people? Adjust to new places?

Have you found any children's books that help your children deal with separations?

Comments: Some children's books that have separation as a theme include:

Bedtime for Frances, R. Hoban

Blueberries for Sal, R. McCloskey

Don't Forget to Come Back, R. H. Harris

First Night Away From Home, F. Watts

Goodnight Moon, M. W. Brown

Tale of Peter Rabbit, B. Potter

You might bring some of these books to class and have parents discuss how they might be used with children.

DISCIPLINE: THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

Spare the Rod

To some extent, the idea of being undisciplined sounds happy and carefree. It may seem that an undisciplined child wouldn't have a care in the world; however, on the contrary, children who are undisciplined feel lost and insecure. Moreover, society could not exist if everyone acted without regard for others. Children have to learn how to take care of themselves and live in a world with other people.

Teaching discipline, then, is one of the most important jobs parents have.

THE BIG IDEAS

Discipline should meet both the present and future needs of children. In the short run, children need help controlling their behavior. In the long run, they need to become responsible for their own behavior.

The two goals of discipline are more likely to be achieved when parents respond to the causes of misbehaviors as well as to the behaviors themselves.

Both goals of discipline are best accomplished when parents use a variety of discipline techniques to meet the needs of different situations.

UNDERSTANDING THE GOALS

Discipline is needed. There's no question about that. Yet, there are probably few topics that arouse as much argument and concern among parents as the subject of discipline.

For many people, "discipline" has negative connotations. Some may regard it as the same thing as punishment. If we look at the source of the word "discipline," however, we find that it has a very positive meaning. "Discipline" comes from the word "disciple," someone who follows the teachings of another person. Discipline, therefore, means a learning experience. Discipline is not something parents do *to* children. It is something they do *with* children.

So what do parents teach through discipline? Self-control. Responsibility. In the long run, discipline should help children take charge of their own behavior. Children have to learn to rely on themselves rather than on parents or other adults to tell them what to do.

Developing self-discipline takes time, though. While this process is taking place, parents have to work on the short-range goal of discipline: to control children's behaviors on a daily basis. Young children need to be protected from hurting themselves and other people, and to be shown appropriate ways to behave.

LOOKING FOR CAUSES

Both the long- and short-range goals of discipline are more likely to be achieved when parents look for the causes of behaviors. Children's reactions are usually very understandable. Often misbehaviors occur when children are:

- Expected to do more than they are capable of doing
- Reacting to threats to themselves or their possessions
- Trying to grow up in the best way they know how.

It is important to understand that, in general, children are trying to accomplish the same things their parents want for them, but sometimes their attempts to do these things turn out badly.

Parents do not have to like these misbehaviors, but by searching for the causes of these behaviors, parents can help children learn to behave in more successful and appropriate ways.

CHOOSING A TECHNIQUE

There is no right way to discipline. Parents discipline most effectively when they combine different discipline techniques with efforts to find the causes of misbehaviors.

Some strategies parents might want to include in their discipline repertoire are:

Let children make some decisions and choices

In the end, the best way to help children learn responsibility may be to give them more of it.

Give children reasons for rules

Understanding the reasons for rules makes it easier to remember them.

Remove children from situations they can't handle

If children are too young to understand, or there's no way to change the cause, it may be possible to change the situation.

Redirect children's behavior

Often there is a way to let children do something in a better place or safe way.

Let children learn what the consequences of their actions are

When a child is old enough to understand, and the results will not be dangerous, experience can sometimes be the best teacher.

Punish the child

Scolding, light spanking, or other forms of punishment may be appropriate in some situations.

The choice of method will depend on the particular parent, child, and situation. In general, parents will find that younger children need more direct control. As children get older, parents can make more use of reasoning, choices, and natural consequences.

Parents should remember, too, that if it is used too often, punishment can lose its effectiveness and may even have negative side effects. It can arouse anger or cause children to forget why they were punished in the first place. Punishment is most effective when it is used sparingly and applied immediately after the misbehavior. Parents should also be sure that children understand why they are being punished.

Discipline takes time. Parents should not be surprised or upset if a child sometimes repeats a misbehavior. In the long run, though, consistent teaching will work out. Slowly but surely, children will move toward self-discipline.

For Further Information...

Away from Bedlam. Caring for Children series, No. 4. Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (booklet)

A Guide to Discipline. Jeannette W. Galambos. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1969. (booklet)

How to Discipline with Love. Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson. New York: New American Library, 1978. (paperback)

A Parent's Guide to Child Discipline. Rudolf Dreikurs and Loren Grey. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1970. (paperback)

Children learn their own way

A consistent and firm but kind way to discipline. You are more likely to achieve this than the inconsistent use of discipline if you know and use a number of techniques that are the following:

Let children make some decisions and choices

Four-year-old Sandra asks her father if she can have a glass of water. He says, "Yes, but only if you can get it yourself." Sandra goes to the kitchen and gets the water.

Five-year-old Sam is taking a bath and splashing water all over. His father asks, "Do you want to close the shower curtain now or wipe up the water when you finish?"

Give reasons for your rules

Three-year-old Mary is playing with her doll. Her mother says, "Don't throw the doll away. It might break." Mary says, "I won't." Her mother says, "I know you won't, but I want you to be sure you don't throw it away."

As she is paying for her purchases at the drug store, Mrs. Gomes asks Maria to help an elderly lady open the door. Maria is looking at toys and doesn't want to go. Mrs. Gomes explains that people have to help each other, and that the woman is not strong enough to open the door.

Remove children from situations they can't handle

Three-year-old Tommy is crying when his father takes him to the grocery store. His father takes him to the other room and plays a game with him.

Two-year-old Tommy starts crying when his father takes him to the grocery store. His father takes him to the other room and plays a game with him.

Redirect children's behavior

Eight-month-old John loves to knock over his cup of milk or juice and watch how it spills. His father puts him in the bath tub and gives him containers so he can pour water in and out.

When Mr. Smith takes 1-year-old Jennifer with him to the grocery store, she reaches for everything on the shelves. Now Mr. Smith always gives her one or two of the colorful boxes from his cart to look at and handle.

Let children learn the consequences of their actions

Mrs. Barry warns 3-year-old Paula that if she keeps hanging her toy truck like that it will break. Paula keeps hanging the truck. It breaks.

Every time they go somewhere, Mr. Washington has to hurry Roscoe along. One day as they are getting ready to go swimming he doesn't nag Roscoe. They miss the bus and have to wait half an hour in the hot sun.

Punish the child

Six-month-old Laura crawls up to a pair of hot tongs near the outdoor grill and starts to touch them. Mrs. Walters slaps her hand and says, "No, No! Hot, Hot!"

Mr. Holbrook has told Peter several times not to ride his bicycle in the street. Peter rides out into the street again. Mr. Holbrook tells Peter that he may not ride his bicycle again for a week.

THE PROGRAM

Spare the Rod

Characters:

Sandy Marshall — a young mother
Ted Marshall — Sandy's husband
Marc Marshall — 5-year-old son of Sandy and Ted
Portia Marshall — Marc's 3-year-old sister
Marcella Wilson — Sandy's sister
Gary Wilson — Marcella's 8-year-old son
Sonny Marshall — Ted's brother
Grandma and Grandpa Marshall — Ted's mother and father

Drama:

As Sandy is talking on the phone with Ted, Portia and Marc burst into the house with their cousin Gary. Sandy sits down with the children to help them decide what to do next. They decide to play upstairs with Marc's trains. Marcella warns that a fight will ensue, and disagrees with Sandy's strategy of offering children choices.

Suddenly, a cry is heard from upstairs. Gary has been trying to teach Marc how to box and has hit him on the nose. In the midst of the disorder that follows, Ted arrives home. He tells Marcella to take Gary home.

At last, peace and quiet reign in the Marshall home. Sandy finishes the paper that is due at school that night while Ted does the dishes. Sandy goes upstairs to get her coat, and finds Marc sitting in a chair in his room. Ted has ordered him to sit there and not make a sound "or else." Sandy leaves for class, disturbed.

That night when the children are in bed, Sonny arrives. He runs upstairs to see "the kids," but Ted follows angrily and orders Marc back to bed. When Marc defies him, Ted picks Marc up and puts him back in bed. Sonny wants to borrow money from Ted for a birthday present for their mother. Ted refuses and lectures Sonny about his lack of discipline. Sandy tries to cheer Sonny up, but he leaves unhappily.

Sandy goes upstairs to talk with Ted. She says that children don't learn anything from being threatened. Ted insists his parents did a good job raising him and Sonny with that method. Sandy asks: "Then what went wrong with Sonny?"

Grandma's birthday party begins on a bright note the next day, but ends abruptly when Grandpa objects to Sonny's use of "street lan-

guage" and lack of respect and slaps him. Ted and Sandy take the children home. On the way Marc takes off his seat belt, and Ted tells him to put it back on. When Marc asks why, Ted answers "because I told you to." Sandy adds: "Because if Daddy had to stop the car quickly, you might get hurt." Marc puts the seat belt back on, and Ted begins to understand what Sandy has been trying to tell him about discipline.

Documentary:

A parent talks about redirecting children's energies when their behavior is not appropriate, and giving them opportunities to contribute to the household.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Have the members of your group state or write out the first answers that come to mind when you ask the following questions:

What does "discipline" mean?

Why do you discipline?

What is the best way to discipline?

Collect and summarize the answers. Have the group discuss why there is such a wide range of opinion about the subject of discipline. Why is it so controversial? On what points do people agree and disagree? Try to come up with a definition of discipline, and talk about the goals of discipline in terms of its short-term and long-term effects.

Ask the members of your group: "What is a misbehavior?" Once again, there may be many different opinions. Have the group come up with a list of common misbehaviors in young children, and then beside each misbehavior list some possible causes for the misbehavior. Ask parents:

When seen next to their causes, do all these behaviors really seem to be misbehaviors?

Can a behavior be a misbehavior in one context but not in another?

How should parents deal with misbehaviors?

Write the following quotation on the chalkboard or a large piece of paper and have parents react to it:

Behavior can be viewed as a language. It is a way a child has of telling us what's "on his mind," what is important to him and what is bothering him.

— I. J. Gordon. *Children's Views of Themselves*. Washington, D. C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1972.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to look for answers to the following questions as they view *Spare the Rod*:

How do Sandy and Ted's views about discipline differ?

How effective is each of their methods in teaching discipline?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

How do Sandy's and Ted's ideas about discipline differ?

Do they have the same goals for discipline?

Where did Sandy and Ted each get their ideas about discipline?

Are Sandy's ideas just "book-learning," as Marcella says?

Are Ted's methods really "threatening"?

Do you think there is any basis for Marcella and Ted's idea that black children need Ted's methods of discipline in order to survive?

Does Ted need to hit his children so that no one else will?

What is likely to happen when parents disagree about a subject such as discipline, as Ted and Sandy do?

Could Ted ever become comfortable with Sandy's methods of discipline? Could you?

Comments: Sandy and Ted appear to agree about the goals of discipline. They both want their children to become secure and independent adults who can take care of themselves. What they disagree about is how to reach these goals. Ted feels that the methods his father used to raise him are best, while Sandy has adopted methods that she's read about.

How does Ted deal with his children's misbehaviors?

How did Marc misbehave? Portia?

Do you think Marc was misbehaving when he refused to go back to bed? When he defied his father at Grandma's birthday party?

When he took off his seat belt? Would Ted say Marc was misbehaving? Would Sandy? Grandpa? Marcella? Marc?

Why do you think Marc acted the way he did on each of these occasions?

How did Ted handle each of these situations?

What did his methods achieve?

What would you have done?

Comments: Ted deals with what he considers to be Marc's misbehavior by ordering him to stop the behavior (e.g., to go back to bed), and forcing him to do so if he doesn't obey (e.g., putting him in bed when he refuses). He also used punishment (e.g., forcing Marc to sit

alone in his room so that Sandy can finish her paper). Ted seems to focus on the short-term purposes of discipline: he handles each situation firmly and independently of the others.

What are Sandy's methods of discipline?

Was Sandy disciplining when she talked with the children about what they wanted to do next? Would it have been better to have given them something safe to do and avoided the accident? Did the children learn anything from the accident?

Was Sandy disciplining when she explained to Marc why he needed a seat belt?

Are preschool-age children capable of making choices? Of understanding reasons?

Do you think Sandy's methods were effective for the short term? In the long run?

Comments: Although Ted's methods are successful in stopping misbehaviors, Sandy feels that the children won't learn anything from these methods that will help them become more self-disciplined. She believes that the best way to discipline children is to encourage them to make choices and decisions, and to give them reasons why they can or cannot do things.

What went "wrong" with Sonny?

What was "wrong" with Sonny?

How did this happen?

How do two children raised by the same parents (Ted and Sonny; Sandy and Marcella) turn out so differently?

Do different children need different methods of discipline?

Comments: It is clear that Sonny never learned to take responsibility for his own behavior. The discipline techniques that he experienced taught him to be dependent on outside forces to tell him what to do and what not to do. He did not receive practice in self-discipline.

How did the discipline techniques seen in the documentary help children develop self-discipline?

What different techniques were explained and shown?

What examples of children controlling their own behavior were shown in the drama?

Comments: Mrs. Stone, the mother in this documentary, says that, like Sandy Marshall, she believes that it's important to give children choices. By making their own decisions, children opt for situations in which they will be doing what they want to do and therefore they are less likely to misbehave. She also makes the point that it is important to

provide children with opportunities to contribute to the functioning of the household — wiping up spills, setting the table, clearing dirty dishes, etc. This technique helps children develop a sense of responsibility for their own behavior.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents recall the different ways they were disciplined as children.

What do you think you learned from each of these methods?

Were some methods more effective than others? Why?

Do you discipline your own children in the same ways you were brought up?

Comments: Most of us learn our ideas about discipline from our parents, as Ted Marshall did. Although we sometimes don't even realize it, we tend to discipline our own children just as we were disciplined.

Have parents discuss the different ways their children misbehave.

What are some of the most common misbehaviors in young children? What do you think are some of the reasons why children do these things?

Can understanding the cause of misbehavior help a parent decide how to deal with it?

Comments: The purpose of this question is to encourage parents to look at some of the causes behind children's misbehaviors, and to use this knowledge to come up with strategies for dealing with the behaviors. Help the group to come up with a general list of underlying causes of misbehaviors, such as those listed on page 79. (See also the unit on *Growing Up: Children Do Their Best.*)

Have parents discuss how they respond to their children's misbehaviors.

What are your goals in disciplining your children?

Do you think in terms of developing self-discipline as well as stopping misbehaviors? Or is it too idealistic to expect parents to think of the future when children are misbehaving now?

How effective do you think your techniques are in meeting your goals?

What do you think your children learn from your techniques?

Do you use different techniques for different situations? Children of different ages? Children of different temperaments?

Comments: Have the group come up with a list of discipline techniques. Evaluate each in terms of its effectiveness in 1) controlling misbehaviors, and 2) helping children become self-disciplined.

What other things can parents do to help children become self-disciplined?

Does discipline take place only when you react to children's misbehaviors?

How else can you prepare your children to take charge of themselves?

Comments: Discipline is an ongoing process. Parents are disciplining whenever they give children a chance to control their own behavior. Some ways in which this can be accomplished are letting children make their own choices or decisions whenever possible and giving children opportunities to contribute to the household.

This might be a good point to hand out copies of the "There's More Than One Way" (see page 81). Have parents discuss the different methods illustrated on this sheet. Which ones have they tried? Which ones are they most comfortable with?

Have parents discuss the role of punishment in discipline.

How effective is spanking in terms of stopping misbehaviors? In terms of teaching self-discipline?

Can spanking ever have negative side-effects?

How effective are other forms of punishment — such as withdrawing privileges or isolating children — in achieving the long- and short-term goals of discipline?

Comments: There may be a wide range of opinion about whether or not parents should spank children. Some parents rely on it frequently; some use it only occasionally as a last resort; and some feel that it should never be used. Most parents will probably feel that spanking is useful in some instances. It should be emphasized, however, that spanking loses its effectiveness when used as the primary form of discipline. Continual use of spanking can backfire, causing anger, the desire to hurt others, and a loss of faith in the parents. To be effective, the intensity of spanking may have to be increased so much that it actually becomes child abuse.

How can you tell if a discipline technique is effective?

What results should you see?

Should you abandon a method if you don't see any results?

How long should you try a technique before you abandon it?

Comments: The effect of a discipline method on the short-term goal of stopping misbehaviors can be observed immediately. However, the long-term effects of developing self-discipline take longer to see.

NUTRITION: IT'S HABIT FORMING

What's Cookin'?

Most parents today are aware of the importance of good nutrition. They know that what we eat affects our physical, emotional, and mental development, and they want their children to eat well. However, making Larry eat his peas or Tanya drink her milk is not enough to ensure good nutrition. In fact, "making" children eat foods they don't like can backfire and produce poor eating habits.

Parents have to look at more than what they give their children to eat. They have to pay attention to what they are teaching children about eating, since the attitudes toward food that children learn from their parents will influence the children's eating habits for many years to come.

THE BIG IDEAS

The attitudes toward food that are formed in childhood are likely to last all through life.

Using food as a reward or punishment, or insisting that children eat everything on their plates, can cause poor attitudes toward eating.

Offering a variety of good foods in a pleasant atmosphere encourages good nutrition habits.

INTO THE MOUTHS OF BABES

Eating habits don't just happen. Children develop tastes for certain foods at an early age. They learn to like what they are given to eat. If they are offered lots of fruits and vegetables, they will probably still enjoy these foods when they are older. If they get used to soda pop and

lollipops, they are likely to naturally reach for overly sweet foods later on.

Children today are constantly bombarded with ads for foods containing large amounts of sugar, especially sugar-coated cereals, candy, soft drinks, and cakes and cookies. The lure of "empty-calorie" foods (foods that fill you up but don't supply many nutrients) is very great indeed. To prepare children to resist these temptations, parents should begin encouraging good nutrition habits during childhood. To do this, parents themselves must be equipped with basic nutrition information. Separating fact from fiction is the first step toward nutrition awareness.

FACT VERSUS FICTION

"A fat baby is a healthy baby," and "Carrots make your hair curly" are two examples of some of the popular nutrition myths that are still around. Another misconception is that children should be given vitamin pills, because "the more vitamins they get the better." That fact is that too much of a vitamin can be as harmful as too little.

Popular books and magazines abound with claims that this or that diet is the way to obtain good nutrition. The truth is that there is no one right way that guarantees good nutrition. The proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals that we all need are found in a wide variety of foods. Many different kinds of diets can supply these nutrients.

SUBSTITUTIONS ALLOWED

Because there are so many different nutritious foods, parents don't have to worry if children won't eat certain things. Most children go through stages where they refuse certain foods or they want to eat the same things all the time. Many dislikes are only temporary, but, even if they are permanent, there is no need for concern. If Jerry doesn't like potatoes, he can get the carbohydrates he needs from bread and rice. There are plenty of foods available to meet children's nutritional needs.

Children vary not only in their food preferences but also in their appetites. One child needs more food than another, and the same child may require different amounts of food at different times. As children grow, their nutritional requirements change. Sometimes their bodies need less food, sometimes more.

Occasionally a child goes on a food "jag," insisting on eating only eggs, for example, or only spaghetti. Even such a clearly unbalanced diet will do no harm for a time. If the child isn't forced to change such an eccentric pattern, chances are a more varied diet will be welcomed by the child soon.

Forcing children to eat foods they don't like is never a good idea. Neither is using food as a reward or punishment. If promised dessert as a reward for eating a certain food, a child may conclude that dessert is the most important part of the meal. Such tactics encourage children to see eating as an emotional issue rather than as an enjoyable way to stay healthy and strong.

RECIPES FOR GOOD HABITS

Once parents have equipped themselves with basic nutrition information, they will find many ways to help children develop good eating habits. They will realize, for example, that snacktime does not have to mean soda pop, candy bars, and chocolate chip cookies. A good snack can just as easily be fruit, cheese, or nuts. Pizza, peanut butter sandwiches, and milkshakes are other examples of tasty snacks that provide children with nutrients as well as calories.

Some other ways to help children develop good eating habits are:

Serve a Variety of Foods

A balanced diet is still the best way to provide good nutrition.

Let Children Help Prepare Meals

By washing fruit, counting out vegetables, and pouring and measuring liquids, children can learn about foods while they develop motor and intellectual skills.

Make Mealtime a Pleasant Experience

When meals are relaxed and happy, children learn to feel good about food as well as themselves.

As parents' awareness of nutrition increases, they will probably become more creative with nutritious foods on their own. Eating is always a treat, but extra attention paid to what we eat brings additional pleasure.

For Further Information...

Cooking Adventures for Kids. Sharon Cadwallader. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1974. (paperback)

Cooking and Eating with Children — A Way to Learn. Washington, D.C.: Association for Childhood Education International, 1974. (booklet)

Creative Food Experiences for Children. Mary T. Goodwin and Gerry Pollin. Washington, D.C.: Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1974. (paperback)

Feed Me! I'm Yours. Vicki Lansky et al. New York: Bantam Books, 1974. (paperback)

Food is More Than Just Something to Eat. U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health, Education and Welfare. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (booklet)

Help! My Child Won't Eat Right. Antoinette Hatfield and Peggy Stanton. Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1974. (paperback)
Nutrition Education for Young Children. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (booklet)

You can also call your local Health Department or the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture in your county for pamphlets and recipes.

...and a lot of other things, like food and pictures of every kind. As you can see, we have a lot of things to offer. We're really coming up with many creative and interesting ideas for you. There are a lot of ideas to get you started.

THE PROGRAM

What's Cookin'?

Characters:

Laura Riley — A young expectant mother

Hunter Riley — Laura's husband

Ned Riley — Hunter's brother

Nancy Riley — Ned's wife

Andy, Zach, and Little Ned — Ned and Nancy's three sons

Drama:

Hunter is driving Laura to church, where she is going to take care of her three nephews while their parents sing in the choir. Later that day, Laura will be cooking dinner for Ned's family, and she and Hunter discuss the nutritious meal that Laura has planned. Hunter is afraid that Ned and his boys won't eat the vegetables she is preparing, since they are very set in their ways about what they like to eat. Laura makes a bet with Hunter that she can get the boys to eat their vegetables.

At church, Ned hands Laura a bag of candy to give the boys as a reward if they behave during the service. However, the boys don't want to wait for their candy. They say they will be good only if they are given the candy beforehand, and they cause a ruckus in church in their attempt to get it.

After the service, Ned teases Laura about her cooking. After she leaves, Hunter defends her and bets Ned that Laura will have him eating vegetables that night, too.

Ned and the boys arrive early for dinner, and Laura offers the boys a snack of cider and celery with peanut butter. The boys taste the celery, but put it back on the tray. When Laura asks for help fixing dinner, Andy says he will help — if he gets a reward. Laura won't go along with this. Food is for eating, not for being good, she maintains.

At dinner, according to his agreement, Ned tries a little of everything, including the vegetables. His smug smile is interpreted by the boys as one of satisfaction, and they try the vegetables and find they like them. Laura has won her bet.

Dessert is gingerbread. As Ned is helping himself to a second piece, Laura comments that he probably likes it so much because the squash and carrots in it keep it moist. In horror, Ned realizes he has lost his bet.

Documentary:

Two sets of parents talk about ways to develop good eating habits in children. They recommend:

- _____ serving a variety of foods to provide the nutrients children miss when they dislike a certain food
- _____ never using food as a reward or punishment
- _____ making mealtime a pleasant experience
- _____ letting children participate in the preparation of food, from planting to serving.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Give parents the following quiz:

- | | <u>True</u> | or | <u>False?</u> |
|--|-------------|----|---------------|
| 1. A fat baby is a healthy baby. | _____ | | _____ |
| 2. Young children need vitamin pills to make sure they get all the nutrients they need. | _____ | | _____ |
| 3. Snacking is bad for children. | _____ | | _____ |
| 4. Children need at least two servings of meat each day. | _____ | | _____ |
| 5. There are a few foods that children simply have to eat because they are the only source of certain nutrients. | _____ | | _____ |

The answer to all of the above questions is FALSE. If members of your group miss any of these questions, have them discuss where they acquired their misinformation. Has this misinformation had an effect on how and what they feed their children?

OK

Have parents discuss where they acquired their tastes for certain foods and their eating patterns:

- Are your eating habits similar to those of your parents?
- Do you feel you should change any of these habits?
- Have you ever tried? Is this easy to do?
- How and when do you think your eating patterns developed?
- Are you influencing your own children's eating habits?

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind two questions as they view *What's Cookin'?*:

- What different attitudes toward food are seen in the film?*
- How does using food as a reward work out in this film?*

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What different attitudes toward food are seen in the film?

How does Laura view food? Ned? The children?

Where do you think each of these persons acquired his or her attitudes toward food?

Do you think there's anything wrong with the eating habits of Ned and his boys?

Why do you think Ned was so dead set against anything that was "good for him"?

Comments: Laura regards food as a way to keep herself, her husband, and her growing baby strong and healthy. Preparing attractive, varied and nutritious foods is, to her, an opportunity to be creative and try new things. She has gone out of her way to inform herself about nutrition, and to collect interesting ideas for snacks and meals.

To Ned, on the other hand, eating is simply a way to indulge his tastes and appetites. He is proud of his limited tastes, of his dislike for anything that looks "different." His children, unfortunately, have adopted their father's habits and preferences.

How did using food as a reward work out in the film?

Why wasn't Nancy's idea about using candy as a reward successful? Do you think that this kind of strategy usually works with the Riley children?

Why did Laura refuse to reward the boys for helping her prepare the meal?

Do you think there are any instances where using food as a reward is a good idea?

Comments: The Riley children's refusal to wait until the end of the service for their reward shows that they have learned how to use food to manipulate their parents and other adults. They have learned how to blackmail with food. For this reason, using food as a reward — or making children eat food they don't like as a punishment — is generally not a good idea.

Did anyone in the Riley family learn anything as a result of Laura's meal?

Did the children learn anything about good nutrition? Would it have helped to explain to them how the different foods they ate were good for them?

Will the Riley children be more likely to eat vegetables and try nutritious foods in the future? How would you go about getting them to eat more nutritious foods?

Do you think the Riley boys would have been willing to try Laura's vegetables if they hadn't mistaken Ned's smug smile for a smile of satisfaction? Are the boys likely to change their eating habits if Ned doesn't change his?

Do you think Ned will be more likely to try nutritious foods in the future? Do you know anyone with eating habits like Ned's? Do you think it's possible to change his or her habits?

Does age affect the ability to change eating habits?

What, if anything, did you learn about nutrition from the film?

Comments: Parents may differ in their opinions about whether or not Ned can still be converted to good eating habits. It is clear, though, that it is not too late for his children to modify their habits. The example and influence of Ned and Nancy will play a key role in determining whether or not this happens. If the children's habits are not changed now, when they are young, they may grow up to be adults with the same poor eating patterns that Ned has.

According to the documentary,

why should parents serve children a variety of foods?

Why wasn't the first mother upset if her children didn't eat squash?

Is there any food that is absolutely essential for children?

Are young children willing to try different foods?

How do you find out what foods you can substitute for others?

What other suggestions did the parents in the documentary make?

Comments: Children are more willing to try new foods than we might imagine. A study done at Ohio State University showed that between the ages of 1 and 2, 77% of the children studied were willing to try new foods. By age 4, this dropped to 7%.

No one food provides all the nutrients that we need to stay strong and healthy. By eating a wide variety of foods, however, we can be sure of getting all the necessary proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Parents who equip themselves with basic nutrition information are more likely to provide their children with the kind of balanced diet they need.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents talk about their own children's appetites and food preferences.

Did your children ever develop strong likes and dislikes for certain foods? Were these temporary or permanent?

Do your children eat what you consider to be too much or too little?

How have your children's appetites and preferences changed as they've grown older?

Can you see your own eating tastes and habits reflected in your children?

Comments: Discuss what was done or could have been done in each situation. The emphasis should be on the fact that our food tastes and appetites reflect our individuality, and that there are many alternative ways to provide children with good nutrition.

How can parents involve their children in the preparation of meals?

What can children learn from helping with food preparation?

How can children's involvement in this task affect family relationships? Their sense of identity?

Comments: Young children can help in the kitchen in a surprising number of ways. Depending on their age, they can:

- cut and slice with saw-toothed knives
- chop, grind and grate
- crack nuts and break open eggs
- pop corn and roll dough
- beat, stir, and mash
- wash and peel fruits and vegetables
- squeeze and strain
- measure and pour
- help shop and plan menus
- help with planting and harvesting vegetables
- clean up.

Children usually treat these tasks as a form of play. Being involved in these activities makes children feel more secure and competent. They feel pride in accomplishment and closer to other members of the family. Also, they learn:

- where foods come from and why they are good for us
- motor skills
- eye/hand coordination
- new words and names
- about numbers and time
- why safety is important
- how to follow directions.

(See also the units on *Competence* and *Identity*.)

What can you offer children for a snack that is tasty and appealing but also nutritious?

Should children be allowed to snack?

Does snacktime have to mean candy, cookies and soda pop?

Will children accept nutritious snack foods?

Comments: Young children need some food between meals, since their stomachs can't hold much food at a time. However, snacks do not have to be junk food. Many nutritious foods are also a treat for children — peanut butter sandwiches, pizza, frozen juice popsicles, ice cream, and fresh fruit. When children are older and there is no danger of choking, popcorn, nuts and seeds are good snacks. Children will especially enjoy these foods if they help prepare them — for example, cut cheese and sandwich meats into interesting shapes with a cookie cutter, or fill celery sticks with peanut butter and top them with raisins to make "ants on a log." What other ideas do parents have?

Is good nutrition worth it?

Are nutritious meals more costly than others? Do they take a lot more time to plan and prepare?

What suggestions do you have for nutritious meals that are inexpensive and easy to prepare?

Comments: Food is expensive these days, and it does take some time and thought to plan and prepare nourishing meals and snacks. There are ways, though, to accomplish these things on a limited budget and busy schedule. Some parents may have experimented with inexpensive protein substitutes, such as soybeans, or less expensive vegetables, such as sprouts. Probably many have found time-saving ideas. Hand out copies of "How to Make Meals Fun For Your Children" and ask parents to share their own ideas for nutritious meals and snacks.

Have parents discuss where they can get reliable nutrition information.

How do you handle different and sometimes conflicting information — about food additives, for example?

What are some of the decisions you have made about what is good for your family? On what basis did you make these decisions?

Comments: Popular magazines and newspapers publish a lot about nutrition. Much of this information is faddish or conflicting. Parents can, however, rely on such sources of nutrition information as: the Food and Nutrition Service or the County Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture; local, state and federal departments of consumer information; and their own doctors and clinics. In the

end, a solid grounding in basic nutrition concepts will enable parents to discriminate nutrition fact from fiction, and to make decisions when faced with conflicting advice.

How can parents deal with outside influences on their children's eating habits?

What influences does TV have on children's food preferences?
Are other children an influence?

Comments: The eating habits of friends and the lure of television commercials can exert a powerful influence on children. For example, approximately 40% of commercials aimed at children advertise cereals. Often these commercials advertise the most expensive, least nutritious products, but they imply that they will keep children healthy. On a typical Saturday between 7 a.m. and 2 p.m., a child is likely to see nearly 70 commercial messages urging him or her to eat or drink sweetened foods.

The best antidote to such influences is the establishment of good nutrition habits and attitudes during early childhood. Discussing with children what they see on TV and relating this information to eating habits in the home can also help to counter undesirable messages. (See also the unit on *Children and TV*.)

PLAY AND FANTASY: THE CHILD'S BUILDING BLOCKS

True Blue

Grownups and children have different concepts of play. To grownups caught up in the work ethic, play may seem unproductive and unchallenging. To a child, however, play is more than a frill. Play is often called the child's work. It is vital to the child's total development.

THE BIG IDEAS

For children, play is a necessity as well as a delight.

Through play children learn about themselves, other people, and the physical world.

Parents enrich their children's play by playing with them and by providing new experiences, play materials, and playmates.

Watching and joining in their children's play helps parents enjoy and understand their children better.

PLAY IS FOR KIDS...

To a child, a day without play is no day at all. Play is as vital as breakfast in the morning. Children put every ounce of energy and concen-

tration into play, because play is their way of learning about themselves, other people, and the physical world.

Watch children. You can detect tremendous growth in their ability to play. From the start children love action. Babies practice single exploratory actions. They kick their feet and shake their rattles over and over and over again. Older babies and toddlers initiate more complex play. Hiding toys under a blanket, filling a box to the brim, and pretending to sleep are just some of the games that they invent.

Preschoolers get big ideas. Their play is more imaginative, planned, and varied. They may explore objects, arrange them in order, build or pretend with them. This is a time of make-believe and imaginary playmates. This is the age when children transform tricycles into race cars and jungle gyms into rocket ships.

Think of how this activity affects children's physical development: squeezing a rubber toy, putting spools in a can, or jumping over a block tower helps build muscles and dexterity.

Play develops brain as well as brawn power. Naturally curious, children work at increasingly difficult problems. They learn how far to stretch to reach that rattle. They start to envision how one container fits inside another. They begin to use and interpret symbols. For instance, they pretend water *is* coffee. They *become* Daddy or Mommy.

Finally, through play children learn to get along with themselves and other people. Play helps them work through feelings such as fear of the doctor's needle or anger at parents' rules and restrictions. Play gives children control over what happens. It also builds self-control: they learn to share a doll, ask for something they want, and cooperate on building the hideout.

...AND PARENTS TOO

Playing with their children can be fun and helpful for parents, too. It's a relaxed and easy way to learn about their children's interests, worries, and skills. It's a way of showing their children that they care. Also, it's one way that they can contribute to their children's total development.

To make the most of the opportunities that play offers them and their children, parents can:

Play With Their Children

Play is based on what children enjoy doing — whether it's playing peek-a-boo or pretending to blast off in a spaceship. Both parents and children can invent such games.

Add Fantasy and Playfulness to Everyday Situations

This can help everyone relax and enjoy routines more. Games such as "Flying the airplane back to its airport" or "How many toys can you carry at one time?" help make cleanup more enjoyable.

Provide Things for Children to Play With

These can include safe household objects and store-bought or home-made toys. Toys should help children pursue new interests and practice new skills. Select a variety that will give children interesting things to do during both quiet and more active play times. Keep a few treasures hidden away for a stretch of rainy days.

Provide Playmates for Their Children

Playing with friends helps children learn new ideas and develop skills of getting along with others. Inviting neighbors' children into their home, setting up a cooperative playgroup, or taking their children to parks are some of the ways parents find playmates for their children.

Take Children to See People, Places, and Things Outside the Home

The more children experience, the richer their play becomes. The best trips are active. Parents should let their children feel and experience the event — climb on the seat of the fire engine, pat the goat or sheep at the fair, smell the elephant, or bury themselves in sand at the beach.

Parents who play with their children will find that play offers lots of possibilities on which to build.

For Further Information . . .

Beautiful Junk. Dianne Warner and Jeanne Quill. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (booklet)

The Block Book. Elizabeth S. Hirsch, ed. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1974. (paperback)

Helping the Child Grow Through Play. Joan Cass. New York: Schocken Books, 1973.

How to Play With Your Baby. Athina Aston. New York: Fountain Publishing Company, Inc., 1971. (paperback)

How to Play With Your Children. Brian and Shirley Sutton-Smith. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1974. (paperback)

Mud, Sand, and Water. Dorothy M. Hill. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977. (booklet)

Young Children in Action. Mary Hohmann, Bernard Banet and David P. Weikart. Write to: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 600 North River, Ypsilanti, Mi. 48197

MAKE A PLACE FOR PLAY

When we think of play, we usually think of children. We forget that it's parents who create an accepting and playful atmosphere in the home. Here are some ways you can support and encourage your children's play.

Join in Your Children's Play

Watch to see what games your children enjoy, and join in along. This may be a game of pretend, sounds or playing with mud, or it could be "Stop Doctor Jack" where you an infection with his plastic syringe.

Listen to the games your children play with words. They like to make funny rhymes, or put words together in new ways. For example, breakfast cereal may be called "Scripties." You can make up a private family language.

Provide Things to Play With

Materials and objects found around the house, things you make, or store-bought toys are all good. Toys should help children pursue new interests and practice new skills. A string tied around an old stuffed animal can transform an ignored plaything into an exciting pull toy for a toddler who is beginning to enjoy pushing and pulling things about.

Outdoors is sometimes empty and boring. Old tires, ropes, and chalk are interesting additions to start imaginative play outside.

Add Fantasy and Playfulness to Everyday Situations

Games can help both parents and children relax and enjoy everyday situations more. "Flying your helicopter up into the bed" is much more fun than waiting. And playing "peek-a-boo" has slipped many a baby from tussling while being dressed.

On long car trips, invent stories about the people you see, or the houses you pass by. Play number games with license plates or look for letters the child knows.

Provide Playmates for Your Children

Invite children from the neighborhood to your home. Set up a cooperative playgroup, or take your children to parks and playgrounds where there are other children. Such activities can help children learn new things and develop the skills needed to get along with other people.

Be available to help when your children get together to play. They need a bit of tactful help, a new idea, or protection from an aggressive playmate now and then.

Take Your Children to See People, Places, and Things Outside Your Home

The more your children experience, the richer their play will become. The best trips are active. For example, children need to climb on a fire engine, get in the driver's seat, and listen to the siren. Afterward, you can supply a few basic props such as old galoshes and a garden hose to recreate their experience.

Many times, the most interesting things go on close to home. The street is repaired, the telephone pole is restringed, or a new house is built. Take a walk around the neighborhood now and then to see what is going on.

THE PROGRAM

True Blue

Characters:

Jeannie Sandburg — a young mother

Amos Sandburg — a young father

Allison Sandburg — 5-year-old daughter of Jeannie and Amos

Christopher Sandburg — Allison's 2½-year-old brother

Amy and Jennifer — two 9-year-old neighbors of the Sandburgs

Grandpa — Jeannie's father

Drama:

Allison has an imaginary playmate named Big Blue who is very real and important to her. When the story begins, Allison tells Big Blue that older girls are excluding her from jump rope and enlists his support as she figures out a way to deal with this problem. She pretends to jump rope with him, makes him a house, and even brings him to lunch with her parents and brother Chris. Amos playfully encourages her to talk about Big Blue, but Jeannie discourages her, saying that it's unhealthy for Allison to be so involved in fantasy.

During lunch, two older girls invite Allison to jump rope. They trick her into swinging the rope for a long time and give her only one short and unsuccessful turn. Exhausted and upset, Allison quits and runs home to play with Big Blue. Jeannie reminds Allison that Big Blue isn't real and tries to interest her in other activities. Allison refuses. Finally, Jeannie tells Allison to restrict Big Blue to her room.

The next day, when it's time to leave for the zoo, Allison hides in the garage. She's upset because her plans to take Big Blue to the zoo conflict with Jeannie's demand that she keep Big Blue in her room. Amos finds Allison and coaxes her to go to the zoo. There, Grandpa and Amos playfully imitate the zoo animals. They try to involve Allison, without success. Grandpa and Jeannie discuss Allison's unhappiness. Grandpa accepts Allison's need for Big Blue and reminds Jeannie that as a young child she had a doll that was extremely important to her. Jeannie admits her mistake. She and Allison go off to find Big Blue, and Allison becomes happy and energetic once again.

Documentary:

Children explain what play means to them. Parents tell why they think that it's important for their children to play, what children learn from play, and how play can be facilitated.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Before the meeting, set out household materials (such as spoons, pots, plates, dolls, dress-up clothes, empty cardboard containers, paper, magic markers, tape) in several different areas of the room. When everyone has arrived, break the total group into groups of 4.

Ask members of each group to use the materials provided to reenact play they've seen their own children engage in.

Have each group analyze this "play."

Ask them to list what children might learn from each activity.

When small groups are finished (15 minutes), ask each to share its list with the whole group.

OR

Ask members of the group to write down or say what comes to mind when they think of play for themselves. Then ask them to state what they imagine their children think of when *they* think of play. Finally, ask how both they and their children would define play. Afterward you might discuss:

how the definitions of play for adults and for children are similar

how the definitions differ

why the definitions differ

the role of play in children's lives versus its role in adult's lives.

OR

Write the following sentence on the board or a large piece of paper:

"Play is the child's work."

Ask parents to react to this statement.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind three questions as they view *True Blue*:

What does Big Blue do for Allison?

Why is Jeannie upset about Big Blue?

How do the adults benefit from play?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What does Big Blue do for Allison?

Why do you think Allison invented Big Blue?

Does Big Blue seem to help Allison?

Could a fantasy playmate become harmful to a child's development?

When do you think Allison will be ready to give up Big Blue?

Have any of your children ever invented imaginary playmates? What did you do? How long did it last?

Comments: In *Childhood and Adolescence*, authors L. Joseph Stone and Joseph Church say that imaginary companions appear most often around the age of 4 or 5 and seem to vanish by age 10. These imaginary companions may seem as vivid and solid as real people to a child. Sometimes they fill the need for a friend, a scapegoat, a conscience, or an escape from reality. They are not necessarily the result of any particular problem. They appear, exist for a while, and then depart — as magically as they came.

Allison, then, is at an age where fantasy playmates can be normal and healthy. We don't know for sure whether Big Blue evolved as a way of dealing with the rejection by her neighbors, but we can see that Big Blue helps Allison:

maintain her emotional well-being despite the rejection by her neighbors. No matter what happens, Big Blue is her constant friend, comforter, and playmate.

solve problems. Talking to Big Blue helped Allison think through the situation with her neighbors and arrive at a solution.

feel powerful. With Big Blue, Allison can be the boss.

Why was Jeannie upset about Big Blue?

From Jeannie's point of view, how was Big Blue harmful to Allison's development?

When Jeannie discouraged Allison's fantasy, how did this affect Allison and their relationship?

What kinds of play was Jeannie comfortable with?

Comments: It is not uncommon for parents to worry when their children create imaginary playmates. Some reasons for Jeannie's reaction to Big Blue might have been that:

Jeannie was not entirely comfortable with imaginative play.

Jeannie was afraid that fantasy would make Allison withdraw from contact with real people and situations.

Jeannie could only relate to play that develops children's intellectual growth — for example, lotto.

How did Amos' reactions differ from Jeannie's?

How did Amos react to Allison's Big Blue fantasy?

Why do you think he reacted so differently from Jeannie?

What other forms of play did Amos participate in?

How does his play with Allison and Christopher affect his relationship with them?

Do you identify more with Amos or Jeannie?

Comments: Amos feels comfortable with fantasy. Fantasy, according to him, is a product of an imaginative mind. He doesn't worry about why Allison invented Big Blue. He is, however, curious about Allison's concept of Big Blue. For example, he asked what Big Blue looks like and likes to eat. Amos wants to enjoy Big Blue as long as he lasts.

Amos initiated play:

when he pretended to be a monkey at the zoo
when he helped Chris wash his hands.

Most parents will agree that Amos and his children seem to enjoy a close and warm relationship. The children feel they can be physically affectionate, have fun, and confide totally in him, as Allison did in the garage. For his part, Amos appears to relax and enjoy himself when he's engaged in play.

**What do you think the children
in the documentary were learning from their play?**

What different types of play activities did the children engage in?
What skills did the children use while they were playing?

Comments: The children in the documentary were showing and learning a great many skills. For example, during group activities children were seen reciting and following rules. Other children were shown cooperating and sharing. Younger children explored their environment with their friends, with animals, with parents, and by themselves. Other children tried out adult roles. The children in the film were learning about their own capabilities — what they could and could not do successfully as well as what they would like to be able to do. Above all, they were having fun as they developed and practiced new skills.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

**Ask parents to give examples
of play their own children engage in.**

Describe your children's play:
what they like to do
the characteristics of their play
what they might be learning

How does your children's play change as they grow older?

Comments: It may be helpful to record the examples on a chalk board or large paper pad and chart the growth in children's abilities to play. For example:

What they do	Characteristics of their play	What they learn
Babies bang and shake objects bounce up and down play peek-a-boo	highly repetitious involve single actions focused on few objects at a time not symbolic	about properties of objects (i.e., some make noise, some are hard) to control parts of their bodies that things exist when they are out of sight
Toddlers fill and empty containers pull and carry toys pretend to meow or bark	still repetitive involving several actions and toys exploratory and experimental imitative	about properties of objects (i.e., shape and size) to coordinate several actions about cause and effect
Preschoolers build towers and enclosures make up words and rhymes pretend to be mommy or daddy	less repetitive still exploratory more experimental and inventive involving planning symbolic	about properties of objects and relationships between them (i.e., likenesses and differences) how to use objects to make things they envision to interpret symbols and make things that are symbolic of other things

Have parents discuss their feelings about playing with their children.

Do you play with your own children? Do you feel comfortable playing with them?

Do you feel more comfortable with some kinds of play than others?
 What have you learned about your children from playing with them?
 Are there times when it's better to let children play by themselves rather than join in?

Comments: The purpose behind these questions is to help parents recognize their own attitudes toward play and encourage them to share their successful experiences playing with children.

You might ask parents to write down games they play with their children so that you can copy and distribute them to the whole group. The games might come from several sources:

their children, who invent games all the time
parents themselves — new ones or games they remember playing as children
games they've seen other parents and children play together.

Parents know which games are appropriate for their children by taking cues from their children. Are they enjoying the game? Sometimes children change a game because its rules are too complicated for them. At other times children change the rules because they think of a new way to keep the game lively and interesting.

Parents may also wish to list places to take children in the community, noting whom to contact at these places, and ways to make these trips real learning experiences.

Have parents share information about toys their children have enjoyed.

How did these toys support your children's play? How did your children use them?

What do you keep in mind when selecting toys for your children?

COST? Which toys are worth the expense? Which aren't?

SAFETY? How do you find out if a toy is safe?

DURABILITY? Which toys have lasted the longest? The shortest?

YOUR CHILD'S AGE? How can you tell for what age child a toy is appropriate? Are the age ranges listed on children's toys always correct? Give examples.

YOUR CHILD'S ABILITY? Should you get toys that are at the child's level, harder, or easier?

YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS? Should you cater to your child's interests? Introduce things to create new interests?

YOUR CHILD'S SEX? Does your child's sex have anything to do with your selection? Should it?

YOUR CHILD'S ETHNIC BACKGROUND? Is this an important consideration in choosing toys?

Comments: Parents can provide:

safe household objects, such as empty boxes, clothes pins, and old clothes. In fact, children find a way to play with almost anything they see. Parents have to limit their children's choices to what is safe and acceptable.

toys they make themselves, such as sock dolls or shakers made by putting buttons inside a plastic bottle. They can even make old toys

seem new. Redressing a tired limp doll can make it seem like a new toy.

store-bought toys that are safe and sturdy, such as stuffed animals with hair and eyes permanently attached so they cannot be swallowed, or wooden blocks painted with non-toxic colors.

toys that are consistent with parents' philosophy. For instance, some parents do not want their children to play with toy guns. Some parents are careful to provide toys designed for both sexes and many ethnic backgrounds. For example, these parents may give their boys dolls as well as trucks, and their daughters blocks as well as dolls. They try to find a variety of dolls and other toys that represent different races and cultures.

Parents can decide which toys are suited to their children's ages and abilities by:

watching their child play. What does he or she like to do: chew/shake/hit/bang/push/pull/put things inside of other things/fit things together/take them apart/make models of things/pretehd?

noting their child's interests. Are these: firefighters/horses/family roles/cars/hor:ses/farms?

finding toys that help children practice the skills they are working on, learn slightly more difficult skills, or pursue new interests.

A workshop devoted to making toys for children of different ages might follow this session. (See also the units on *The Need for Early Stimulation and Creativity*.)

LOVING CHILDREN: GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

I Love You When You're Good

All parents want their children to like and respect themselves. Few things are more important in determining what children become than their sense of self-esteem. Children's feelings about their worth are at the very core of their being. These feelings determine how secure children feel. They affect not only children's mental health, but also:

- what friends they choose
- how well they get along with others
- how productive they are in school and at home.

In their early years, children learn about their worth mainly from their parents. Loving children is largely a matter of getting the message across.

THE BIG IDEAS

A sense of self-worth helps children lead productive lives and form rewarding relationships with others.

Children feel secure about themselves when they are valued and accepted for what they are.

It is largely through the quality of the relationship with their parents that children build a sense of worth.

A VALUABLE MESSAGE

It's easy to notice the difference between children who don't feel good about themselves and those who do. Children with low self-esteem tend to act very differently from those with a strong sense of worth. Some withdraw from other people and experiences. They are afraid to risk new things, because failure hurts them much more deeply than it does other children.

Other children who feel insecure defend themselves against this feeling in more aggressive ways. They spend a lot of time trying to convince themselves and others of their worth by bragging and bullying.

Children who feel good about themselves, on the other hand, are free to be themselves. They don't have to waste time proving their worth. Instead, they use their energies on more rewarding tasks. They aren't afraid to try out their wings. They are open and alive.

Whether children develop a sense of being worthy or not depends on many things. One of the most important is whether they feel valued and cared for by their parents. Children's feelings about being loved have a strong effect on their future development.

HIDDEN MESSAGES

Children start getting messages about their worth from the first moments of life. Simple, everyday things tell children whether their parents love them — or not. Unintentionally, parents' words and actions can say to children that they don't really matter much. If parents are always in a hurry when they care for their children, children could learn that their parents don't think they are important. If parents express their love only under certain conditions, children may learn that they are loved — IF they obey, or IF they don't wet the bed, or IF they don't make any mistakes. If children keep hearing that they are bad, they may begin to believe it.

And, if children receive many such messages, they may begin to think that their parents aren't very glad to have them.

SUCCESSFUL SIGNALS

Children need love and affection in large doses. In fact, it's probably safe to say that children can't get too much love. To show their love and get their children's self-esteem off to a good start, parents can:

Look at What Their Words and Actions May Be Telling Children About Themselves

Most parents love their children, but not all children feel loved. Even when their parents love them, some children think they're just a

bother. Others learn that their parents love them only when they behave in certain ways. Not all children are lucky enough to learn from their parents that whatever they say or do, their parents care, but it is this kind of unconditional love that gives children a strong sense of self-worth.

Find Ways to Show Children That They Are Loved

Being loved is not the same thing as *feeling* loved. It's not enough for parents to love their children. They have to be sure that their children know that, too. Parents need to express their love to children in ways that children understand — a shared experience, a warm smile, a gentle touch, or a kind word, for example.

This doesn't mean that if parents ever lose their temper they've ruined their children forever. Children are flexible and mend well. They don't need perfect parents; ordinary people will do. What counts is the overall climate in the home. If it is a loving and accepting climate, then slowly but surely children will learn that they are valued —

just the way they are,
just because they are,
no if's, and's, or but's.

For Further Information...

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Caring. Supporting Children's Growth. Rita M. Warren. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1977. (booklet)
Peoplemaking. Virginia Satir. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, 1972. (paperback)
The Roots of Love. Helene S. Arnstein. New York: Bantam Books, 1975. (paperback)
Your Child's Self-Esteem. Dorothy Corkille Briggs. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970. (paperback)

LOVE LETTERS

Few things will be more important in deciding your children's future than their sense of self-worth. A feeling of self-worth is essential for children to become all they could be. The suggestions described below can strengthen your children's self-esteem by letting them know you love and value them.

Find the Time to Give Children Special Attention

Parents lead busy lives. It's all too easy for children's needs to get lost in the midst of shopping lists, dentist appointments, and the weekly wash. That's why it's important for you to find or make time when you can focus just on your children — when you can talk to them, listen to them, and show interest in their activities. Time may mean pulling down the iron or paint brush to take a close look at the caterpillar Johnny just found, or scheduling a walk with Selly at the end of the day just to talk.

Express Affection Often Through Physical Contact

Physical affection is a basic human need. It's also one of the languages of which children understand best. Babies thrive on cuddles and caresses. As children get older, you can offer hugs, kisses, an arm over the shoulder, or a pat on the back. Sometimes the right words are hard to find, but a gentle hug says it all.

Treat Your Children With the Same Respect You Show Adults

Too often we take children for granted. We reserve one set of manners for adults, and another for children. We embarrass children by scolding or criticizing them in front of others. We get so involved in a conversation we forget their presence. We make them wait for us longer than we would make an adult wait. Children are no less sensitive than adults and deserve the same kind of respect.

Tell Children From Time to Time That They're Loved

Never assume your children know they're loved and appreciated. Children need to be told these things — again and again. It's also important not to wait until children get good grades or do something well to express these feelings. A spontaneous "It's sure nice to have you around" can give children's self-esteem a healthy boost.

Respond to Your Children With Patience and Understanding

When children spill their milk for the third time in a row, or hit their friend over the head with a toy shovel, it's easy to treat them as criminals. Try, however, to see children for what they are: young human beings who need help from grown-ups in controlling their bodies and emotions.

Respect Children's Feelings and Abilities

Because of their size, we sometimes forget that children are people, too. They have a right to privacy, to ownership, and to feelings of their own. We may have to remind ourselves not to carry children when they can get there on their own steam, or to push and pull them when we are in a hurry. We may have to stop ourselves from speaking for children when they can do this for themselves: "Juanita thinks your present is lovely, Carlos."

THE PROGRAM

I Love You When You're Good

Characters:

Joe Sanchez — a young father

Maggie Sanchez — Joe's wife

Christina Sanchez — their 4-year-old daughter

Tio Daniel — Maggie's great uncle

Cindy — Maggie's younger sister

Lucy — a friend of Cindy's

Patty — Lucy's 5-year-old daughter

Drama:

As the Sanchez family finishes a late breakfast, Cindy persuades Maggie, Joe, and Tio Daniel to let her friend Lucy stay with them until she finds a new apartment. Just as the adults agree, the doorbell rings, and Cindy opens the door to Lucy and her daughter, Patty. As Lucy introduces Patty to the family, she chides Patty for not being more friendly and polite. Mechanically, Patty curtsies and says: "How do you do?" Christina tries to talk to Patty, but Patty clings more closely to her mother. Embarrassed by Patty's shyness, Lucy prompts her to show everyone how smart she is by reciting a poem. Joe is impressed and asks Christina if she could learn a poem, too.

At bedtime that evening, Patty lies quietly in bed while Christina runs around giggling. Joe seems embarrassed by Christina's behavior, and sternly orders her to be a good girl like Patty. He implies that Maggie is spoiling Christina.

Meanwhile, Lucy has been trying on different clothes and worrying about how she looks. When Maggie comments on Lucy's low-cut blouse, Lucy explains that she has to dress like that to please her boyfriend. As Lucy leaves to drive herself and Joe to work, she reminds Patty that she loves her when she's good. Joe looks on approvingly.

The next morning, Patty and Christina awaken Joe as they play ball. Maggie explains to the girls why they must be quiet. Patty appears terrified that she has made the Sanchez family angry. When Lucy scolds Patty harshly for being bad, the reason for Patty's terror becomes evident. Lucy makes Patty apologize, and tells her that nobody loves a bad child.

As Joe leaves for work that night, the tension between him and Maggie leads to an argument. Maggie maintains that both Lucy and Patty are insecure, frightened, and dependent on the approval of

others. Joe believes that Lucy is a wonderful mother and Patty a very well-mannered child. Later that evening, while on duty, Joe finds Lucy at a cocaine party. As Lucy explains tearfully to Joe that she "had to do it" for her boyfriend, Joe begins to see that Maggie was right.

Documentary:

Dr. Bettye Caldwell explains that one of the most important things parents can teach children is that they are loved unconditionally — with "no strings attached." She tells viewers how they can communicate to their children through their actions — as well as their words — that they are loved and valued.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Have the members of your group react to the following quote:

The supreme happiness in
life is the knowledge
that we are loved.
— Victor Hugo

Do they agree or disagree with this idea? Ask them:

Why is it so important to be loved?

What does it feel like to be loved?

How does being loved affect your behavior?

Are the ways in which you show love to a child different from the way you love another adult? How?

OR

Ask parents to remember a day when they felt unloved and unappreciated, when they just wanted to crawl under the sheets and never come out again. Then ask them to recall a day when they knew they were cherished and understood, when they felt on top of the world. In each of these cases, ask:

How did your feelings on each of these days affect how productive you were? How well you got along with others?

What were some of the things people said and did to make you feel the way you did?

Do you think children's feelings about themselves are affected by the same kinds of things?

In both of the above activities you will want to emphasize the relationship between feeling loved and feeling worthy, and the influence of self-esteem on every aspect of life.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind the following questions as they view *I Love You When You're Good*:

Under what conditions does Lucy express her love for her daughter Patty?

How does this seem to affect Patty's development?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Under what conditions does Lucy express her love for her daughter Patty?

How did Lucy act toward her daughter when Patty was "good?"

How did Lucy treat Patty when she didn't behave the way Lucy wanted her to?

Do you think Lucy loves Patty?

Comments: The way Lucy acted toward Patty was dependent on how Patty behaved. When Patty was "good," Lucy praised her and offered kisses and other forms of physical affection. When Lucy didn't like the way Patty was acting, however, Lucy punished and withdrew her love from Patty.

It may be that Lucy really loves Patty — no matter what — but that message has clearly not been getting across to Patty.

How was Patty's development affected by Lucy's treatment of her?

How sure of herself did Patty seem to be?

How did Patty's feelings about herself affect her behavior?

Comments: Patty has been learning that her worth and acceptability are dependent on what she does and how well she does it. This is a very insecure situation for a child. Because her mother's love had so many strings attached, Patty seemed afraid to take risks and in great need of constant approval from others. She appeared to be a shy, frightened, and unhappy child.

Why was Joe so impressed by Lucy's methods at first?

What did he think Lucy was teaching Patty?

What happened when he tried to use some of Lucy's techniques with Christina?

What made Joe change his mind about Lucy's techniques?

Comments: Initially, Joe seemed dazzled by Lucy's parenting techniques. He saw Patty as much more polite, refined, and well-behaved than his own daughter, and began to wish that Christina were more quiet and obedient. He evaluated Lucy's parenting techniques only in

terms of their effect on immediate behavior; to Joe, Lucy's techniques got results.

Joe held Lucy up to Maggie as a model mother. It was only when the drug raid dramatically pointed out to Joe how dependent and insecure Lucy really was that he began to question the merits of her approach.

What did Maggie see that Joe didn't?

Why did Maggie disagree with Lucy's methods?

How would Maggie have described Lucy's self-image? How would you describe Lucy's feelings about herself?

How did Lucy's treatment of Patty reflect Lucy's feelings about herself?

Where did Lucy learn her methods of parenting?

Comments: As Maggie saw right away, Lucy is an insecure person who can't even decide what to wear without getting someone else's opinion first. Her willingness to do almost anything to gain favor in the eyes of others led to her involvement (despite her better judgment) in the cocaine party.

Maggie also saw that Lucy was instilling in Patty the same insecurities she herself possesses. She was concerned when Joe began to emulate Lucy's style, for this began to affect Christina in the same way as Patty almost immediately.

How did Maggie's parenting methods differ from those of Lucy?

How did Maggie's methods affect Christina's development?

What was Maggie teaching Christina about herself?

Was Joe right? Was Christina spoiled?

Why was Christina better able to withstand criticism than Patty?

Comments: Maggie's treatment of Christina was quite different from Lucy's treatment of Patty. Maggie was:

generous in expressing her physical affection for Christina

accepting of Christina's childish behavior as well as her more desirable behaviors

able to discipline Christina for misbehaviors without withdrawing love and affecting Christina's self-esteem.

Christina was learning from Maggie that she was lovable and worthwhile — just as she was. Because she was secure in her parents' love, she was able to accept criticisms of her behavior without crumbling. She was open, alive, and eager to reach out to other people.

Have parents discuss Dr. Bettye Caldwell's idea that the home should be a place of refuge for children.

What are the things that make a home a haven for children?
How does this idea relate to Patty's and Christina's situation?

Comments: Dr. Caldwell explained that the home should be a place where children are accepted totally. She feels that it is important that the home be a secure place for the child since so much of growing up involves failure for the child. If the home can serve as a buffer against the necessary failures of learning through trial and error, the child will more easily adapt to temporary setbacks.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

What does it mean to be loved "with no strings attached"?

Will children who know they're loved no matter what they do grow up to be spoiled and undisciplined?

Can you discipline a child for a misbehavior without damaging the child's self-esteem? How?

Comments: Some parents believe that freely loving and approving children will turn them into self-satisfied brats. The truth is, however, that feeling loved and approved leads to a sense of self-esteem. And when people feel good about themselves, it is easier for them to care for others.

It is the children who feel unwanted and unloved who sometimes turn into brats and bullies and braggarts (and, later on, perhaps even juvenile delinquents or criminals). Their obnoxious behavior is an attempt to convince themselves and others of their worth.

Reasonable discipline, rather than lowering self-esteem, communicates to children that parents truly do care for them. Some methods, however, such as harsh punishment and love withdrawal, can severely damage children's self-esteem — especially if they are used consistently. Nothing makes children more secure than the knowledge that even though they may mess up sometimes, and even though they have a lot to learn, they are still lovable and worthwhile to their parents.

How can parents show their children that they are valued and accepted?

Thinking back on your own childhoods, what were some of the things that made you feel secure and loved? What kinds of things made you doubt your worth?

Can parents who love their children fail to communicate this message to children?

What are some of the effects on children's behavior of feeling loved?

What are the results of feeling unloved? Do you know any children who fit either of these descriptions? How do they act?

Comments: With children, it's often the little things that count. Parents may shower children with gifts or move the family into the largest home in town, but if parents aren't around to spend time with their children, the children will not feel loved.

Help parents to see how love and acceptance are communicated — or not — through everyday experiences. For example, during feeding and dressing times, one parent may always rush along, trying to do something else at the same time and never noticing the child's coos and smiles. This child may learn that he or she is just in the way. Another parent may take advantage of such times to be close to the child, taking time to tickle his or her toes, gurgle back, and play peek-a-boo with the diaper. This child will probably learn that he or she is worth a lot of tender loving care.

How parents respond to misbehaviors is another important way in which they teach children about their worth. You might have parents think about some responses to misbehaviors that lower self-esteem, and some that maintain it. You might even draw up a chart such as this:

Situation	Responses that lower self-esteem	Responses that maintain self-esteem
John leaves his toys all over the living room floor.	"You are so lazy and inconsiderate."	"I don't want to pick up after you, John. Please put your toys away."
Carol pinches her baby brother.	"You're a very bad girl."	"Don't do that to your little brother, Carol. I love him just like I love you, and I don't like to see either of you hurt."

Hand out copies of "Love Letters" (page 114), and have parents discuss these different strategies for boosting self-esteem.

How do parents' own feelings about themselves affect how they treat their children?

Can you value your children if you don't value yourself?
How can parents work on developing their own self-esteem?
How can a couple help each other to feel secure and loved?

Comments: There is often a relationship between how parents feel about themselves and how they behave toward their children. Like Lucy in the film, we tend to model our own parenting styles after those

of our parents. If parents were brought up in a climate of love and acceptance, it is likely that they will create this same kind of atmosphere within their own homes. If, however, parents did not learn that they were valued, they may not know how to communicate love and acceptance to their own children — or even feel that it is important to do so.

This does not mean, however, that parents who do not feel very sure of themselves are unable to teach their children that they are worthy. Patterns of behavior can be changed.

You might suggest to parents that they give some thought to their own feelings of worth. They might start by taking a self-inventory: Do I like myself the way I am? Do I think other people like me? Do I wish I were someone else? Do I treat myself with respect? If parents think they need to increase their own feelings of self-esteem, they might take some steps toward this goal, such as:

getting involved in activities that make them feel good about themselves

seeking out friends who treat them with respect

paying more attention to their physical and emotional needs.

LISTENING TO CHILDREN: CHILDREN SHOULD BE SEEN AND HEARD

The Secret of Little Ned

"Kids. What do they have to say?"

A lot. Yet many parents think they have nothing to learn from their children. Some even assume they know just what their children are thinking and feeling all the time, so they end up talking to their children much more than they listen.

However, talking is just half of the process of communication. The other half is listening. Listening is one of the best ways parents can get to know their children. It is also one of the best ways parents can show their children they care.

THE BIG IDEAS

Listening to children is as important as talking with them.

Children do not always express their thoughts and feelings in ways that are clear to parents.

By paying attention to children's verbal and nonverbal messages, parents can learn more about how their children think and feel.

A LOT TO LEARN

Parents talk to their children a lot. They lecture and preach. They judge and direct. They blame and scold. Only rarely do they just listen, and even when they do, it may be "with only one ear."

This is unfortunate, for children have a lot to share with their parents. They have their own very special thoughts and feelings, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears. When parents open themselves up to what their children have to say, they are often rewarded with a fascinating look into how their children think, feel, and learn. They get to know their children better and deepen their relationship with them. Most important, parents give their children's self-esteem a boost when they listen to and value what children say.

DECODING A MESSAGE

Children have many reasons for wanting their parents to listen. They may need sympathy or more attention. Sometimes they want to share an important moment. At other times they need help figuring out a problem or correcting a misunderstanding.

Children don't always fully understand what they're thinking and feeling. They can't always say exactly what they mean. "I hate the new baby," for example, may really mean "I'm scared that you don't love me anymore."

With sympathetic listening, though, parents can help their children explore and sort out their thoughts and feelings. Often, just by putting their thoughts into words and sharing them with someone, children can find solutions to their own problems.

BODY TALK

Children speak in other ways than words. Their bodies and behaviors have a language of their own. Even young babies are fluent in this language. They reach out to parents with their arms when they want to be picked up. They choose from a whole repertoire of cries to say that they're tired or hungry, wet or bored. Older children continue to give cues through their facial expressions, posture, gestures, movements, actions, and tone of voice.

Body language is one of the most effective methods of communication children have. Behavior, too, often speaks louder than words. Drooping shoulders and dragging feet can speak with more force than the words "I'm sad." Purposely breaking a new toy can be a successful way of getting attention when words have failed, and it's easy to notice that children are excited when their eyes light up and they talk non-stop.

Children have lots to say, and many ways to say it. It's just up to parents to listen.

THE BETTER TO HEAR YOU WITH

Listening is an active process that demands parents' full attention. Real listening means focusing on what a child is *trying* to say as well as what the child *is* saying. It's a skill, but one that all parents can learn by following these simple guidelines:

Be Available to Listen to Children

It's best, of course, to listen to children right when they need their parents. Putting down the newspaper or turning off the iron in order to give children full and undivided attention shows children that parents are listening. Sometimes, though, parents just can't listen when their children want them to. When this happens, parents can tell children *why* they can't listen right then, and *when* they'll be able to.

Try to Understand What Children are Trying to Say

Interrupting children or making judgments about what they are saying does not lead to understanding. Instead, parents should, as the old railroad signs used to say, "Stop, Look, and Listen." Listening comes a lot easier when parents follow children's cues and let them lead the way.

Act on What Is Learned From Listening

When parents really hear what their children are trying to say, they can be more skillful in helping them. Sometimes, however, parents get the message straight and true, but do not respond. "He's only doing it to get attention," they say, and turn away, refusing to act on the message that clearly revealed the child's need.

Sometimes, of course, parents don't like what their children have to say or the way they behave. Sometimes they don't agree with their children, and sometimes they're not sure how to respond. However, by listening to their children's point of view and respecting their feelings, parents can better understand how children see things.

For Further Information...

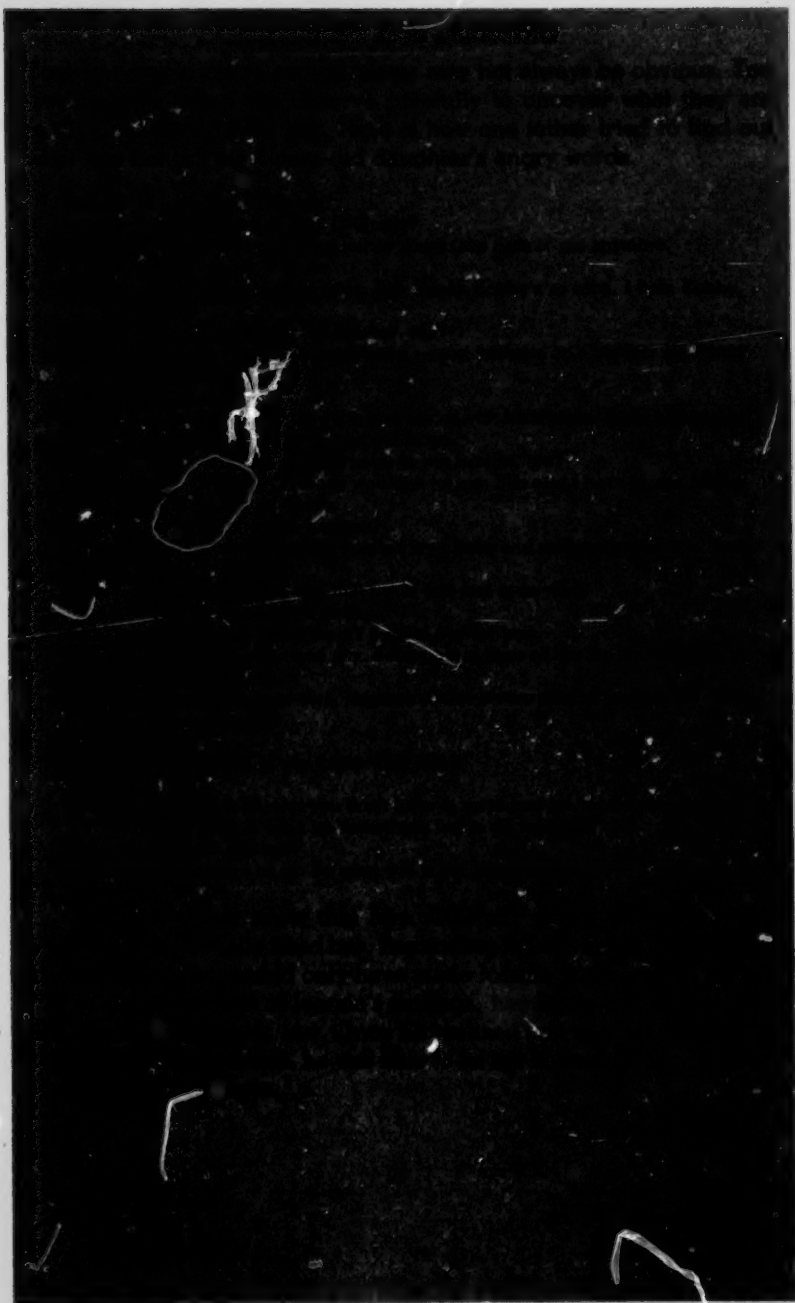
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THE PROGRAM

The Secret of Little Ned

Characters:

Laura Riley — a young pregnant woman
Hunter Riley — her husband
Ned Riley — Hunter's brother
Nancy Riley — Ned's wife
Little Ned — Ned and Nancy's 5-year-old son
Andy and Zach — Ned's 8- and 3-year-old brothers
Bill — Hunter's friend

Drama:

Ned and Nancy Riley and their oldest son, Andy, are going to an out-of-town wedding, and Zach and Little Ned are spending the weekend with Laura and Hunter. Laura has been looking forward to the weekend, thinking it will be great practice for taking care of their own expected child, but from the moment Little Ned and Zach arrive, Little Ned doesn't seem to think the weekend is fun at all.

Shortly after the boys arrive, Laura finds Ned in the pick-up truck. He accidentally releases the brake, causing the truck to roll down an incline, but manages to stop it. Laura is relieved but upset, and reminds Little Ned he's not old enough to play in the truck by himself. Then Laura and the boys leave to do some shopping. Laura asks Little Ned to get some napkins, and he brings back sanitary napkins. When Laura laughs but won't explain why, he runs angrily out to the car.

As they carry the groceries into the house, Little Ned insists on carrying the largest bag, despite Laura's warnings. When the bag breaks, Laura reminds Little Ned that "I told you."

A little later, while Laura and the boys are cooking, there is a call for Hunter. While Laura goes to get Hunter, Little Ned takes a message, leaving Zach to make a mess in the kitchen. When Laura returns, all she sees is the mess, and doesn't hear Ned when he explains that he got the phone message right. Laura is becoming increasingly puzzled and frustrated by Little Ned's hostility to her and by her own inability to understand what he wants. She feels even worse after Hunter takes Ned to help load wood and has no trouble at all with him.

That night, Little Ned tells Laura that he doesn't want to go to sleep at the same time as Zach. Laura enlists Hunter's help putting Ned

to bed. Hunter leaves his beer upstairs, and a little later Ned comes downstairs with it. Laura thinks back on the day's events, and realizes that all day long Ned has been trying to say that he wanted to be treated like he is "old enough."

Documentary:

Dr. James L. Hymes, Jr., discusses the signals that children use to convey their feelings to parents. He emphasizes the idea that although children often encode their feelings, parents can learn to decipher the true message.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Talk with parents about how we listen. Discuss different kinds of listening — for example, listening to the information presented in the evening news as opposed to listening to the feelings and emotions expressed in an intimate conversation. Bring up some of the obstacles to good listening:

Do we sometimes listen only to what we want to hear?

Do we listen to some people more seriously than others — males more than females, for example, or adults more than children?

Many parents may remember playing the game "telephone," the game where someone starts a rumor and each person whispers it into the ear of the next. When the last person announces what he or she heard, it is usually quite different from the original rumor. Ask parents what this suggests about how much of our "listening" is really listening and how much is interpretation. Does this apply particularly to the way we listen to young children?

OR

Ask several parents to "describe a child you know," and then have the group talk about the parents' descriptions. More than likely, at least some of the descriptions will be interpretive of the child's behavior and how it affects the adult, rather than factually descriptive of what the child is really like.

Use this example to talk about the need of parents and other adults to refrain from judging and interpreting children's behaviors and focus more on what children are saying through their behavior. This is what we mean by using behavior as a language and "listening" to it.

OR

Have parents react to the following quote:

Behavior can be viewed as a language. It is a way a child has of telling us what's "on his mind," what is important to him, and what is bothering him. If we are willing to look at a youngster's behavior in such a way and listen to his "language," there are many cues and tips that he offers us which aid in understanding him.

— Ira J. Gordon
Children's Views of Themselves
Washington, D. C.: Association for
Childhood Education International,
1972.

Ask parents to discuss whether they agree and, if so, how parents can go about listening to the language of behavior.

To Introduce the Program...

Have parents look for answers to the following questions as they watch *The Secret of Little Ned*:

What is Little Ned's "secret"?

What clues does Little Ned give about what his secret is?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What was Little Ned's "secret"?

What was bothering him?

What was he "saying" through his actions?

What might have motivated Ned's unhappiness?

Comments: Little Ned had been feeling all weekend that he was being treated like a baby. It seemed like he was "too little" to do just about everything.

Ned's unhappiness appeared to be triggered by not being able to attend the weekend wedding, like Andy was. It is likely, though, that his need for recognition went back further than this particular weekend. It may have been due partly to his position as the middle child, and partly to his being at an age where identification with the male role begins. He may have just been tired of being "Little Ned" and wanted to be "Big Ned" for a while.

What clues did Little Ned give about what his "secret" was?

What behaviors showed that something was bothering him?

How did he try to communicate what it was he wanted and needed?

Comments: From the very beginning of the show, Little Ned gave signs to Laura, Hunter, and his parents that he wanted to be seen as "old enough":

As his parents were preparing to leave for the weekend, Little Ned kept asking why he couldn't go to the wedding, too. He pointed out that he was almost as old as Andy, and a lot older than Zach. He expressed his jealousy, too, by asking if Andy "gets to wear a tie," by hiding Andy's new shoes, and by playing with Andy's stick.

When Ned and Nancy dropped Little Ned off at Hunter and Laura's, Little Ned refused to be picked up by Hunter.

The first thing Little Ned did at Hunter and Laura's was to head for the pick-up truck and pretend that he was driving it. He was upset when Laura didn't seem to appreciate the fact that he was able to stop the truck himself.

He was eager to help Laura in the store, and was humiliated when she laughed at him in front of other people, without even explaining what was so funny.

Little Ned seemed to be insulted when Laura didn't think he could handle the larger grocery bag, and his pride was hurt when he in fact couldn't.

He was hurt again in the kitchen, when Laura wouldn't let him take the phone message to Hunter because it was "too complicated," when she accused him of making the mess Zach had made, and when she didn't recognize that he had been able to take and remember correctly a message for Hunter.

Little Ned's needs were met for the first time that weekend when he helped Hunter and Bill load wood. There, he warmed up to their recognition that he was doing a man's job, and grinned happily when he was offered a sip of beer because — at last — he was "old enough."

Because he was older, Little Ned didn't want to have to go to bed at the same time as Zach and listen to his "baby songs."

Through these and other requests, Little Ned appealed to Laura and Hunter to treat him responsibly and differentiate him from Zach.

Why did it take Laura and Hunter so long to figure out what was bothering Little Ned?

Would you have expected them to have "caught on" sooner?

Was Little Ned's "secret" so hard to figure out?

What finally gave Laura some notion of what Little Ned had been trying to say?

Comments: As listed in the preceding section, Little Ned found a great many ways to convey his unhappiness and frustration. Until the end of the program, though, Laura and Hunter missed these signs. This may have been partly due to the fact that they weren't looking for them. It was probably also due to their lack of experience. Like many new parents, they did not realize that often children cannot tell a parent in so many words what is bothering them. It is up to parents to observe their children's behavior closely and listen to what they are trying to say.

Could the weekend have been as much fun as Laura had hoped it would be?

What kept it from being a fun weekend?

Did Laura have unrealistic expectations about what it's like to care for children?

How would you have responded to Little Ned?

What kinds of things could Laura and Hunter have done to make it a more satisfying weekend for everyone?

Comments: Laura's desire for a weekend of fun for both the boys and herself was a natural one. The weekend was especially important to her because it was her first chance to care for children on an extended basis. Some parents may suggest that she subconsciously denied Ned's unhappiness in order to keep the weekend at a "fun" level. Certainly her inexperience, combined with Hunter's denial of any problem, didn't help the situation. If Laura and Hunter had been more sensitive to Ned's needs, and more knowledgeable about how children express themselves, more of the weekend's lost fun could have been recouped — as it was at the end of the film.

What different cues were the children in the documentary giving their parents?

How did their parents respond to these behaviors?

What did James L. Hymes, Jr., say about the significance of these behaviors and the ways in which parents should respond to them?

Comments: Through behaviors such as crying and trying to replace an older sibling on Daddy's lap, the children in the documentary expressed feelings of jealousy and fear. Some parents in the documentary "listened" to these behaviors and were, therefore, able to be responsive to them; others did not.

Dr. Hymes suggested that there are three steps involved in listening to children's behaviors:

1. Understand that the child is trying to say something.
2. Try to figure out what the child is trying to say.
3. Do something about it.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss their own experiences of not being listened to.

Can you recall times during your childhood when you felt you weren't being heard? How did this make you feel? How did you try to make yourself heard?

Do you still feel sometimes that people aren't listening to you? How does this affect you now? What do you do about it?

Comments: Through their personal reflections on how it feels to be "unheard," try to help parents see how hard it must be sometimes for young children, with their limited vocabulary and understanding of themselves, to make themselves heard and understood.

What do young children have to say?

Do they really have anything to say that's worth listening to? Or should we just listen to make them feel good?

What have you learned by observing and listening to children's words and actions?

How do children benefit when adults listen to them? What do adults gain by listening?

Comments: Parents who don't really listen to their children miss out on a rare opportunity, for children have lots of important and wonderful things to say. Parents who do observe and listen closely to their children are able to:

learn what their children are really like
delight in their children's fresh and unique view of the world
marvel at how their children's minds work
share in their children's feelings and emotions.

Through the knowledge and understanding that grow out of this kind of observation and listening, parents are able to experience the satisfaction of being able to respond to their children's needs, and children, by observing that they are worth listening to, grow in confidence and self-esteem. (See also the unit on *Loving Children*.)

How do children tell adults what they are thinking and feeling?

What other methods besides words do they use? Can you give some specific examples of children's nonverbal language?

Why don't children always say what they mean?

If there is inconsistency between what children say with words and what they say with action, which do you tend to believe?

Comments: Children, like all of us, communicate through behavior and body language as well as words. These first two ways of talking are

often even more reliable than words in reflecting genuine feelings. Children cannot always articulate exactly what is on their minds. Sometimes they don't completely understand what is going on inside them. At other times, when they are unsure of how adults will react, children may even be afraid to say exactly what they mean.

Suzanne Szasz has illustrated the language of the body. If you can find a copy of her book, *The Body Language of Children*, you might want to discuss the photographs and the emotions they represent with parents.

Another possible activity would be to have parents use body language (i.e., facial expressions, gestures, posture, body movement and actions — but not words) to express different emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, jealousy, happiness, defeat, confusion, and the need for attention. Have other members of the group "listen" to this body talk and describe what they "hear."

Why don't parents and other adults always listen to what children are saying?

What are some typical ways in which parents respond to children?
What does this show about their attitude toward children?

Comments: When children try to communicate with parents or other adults, all too often the grown-ups feel compelled to respond by giving orders, warning, preaching, offering advice, criticizing, making judgments, ridiculing, interpreting, blaming, questioning, and withdrawing. When they react in these ways, and don't give children the time or opportunity to express themselves fully, parents often miss out on what their children are trying to say.

Ask parents to come up with some examples of responses that fit the above categories and to think about whether they themselves tend to react in one or more of these ways. Alternatively, give parents copies of the following conversation, and have them analyze the different ways this parent responds to her child:

Cheryl: "That Judy is so stupid. I hate her!"

Parent: "It's not nice to hate people, dear. You should try to like everybody."

Cheryl: "Well, I don't like Judy. I hate her. Tomorrow I'm going to trip her and make her fall flat on her face."

Parent: "Now, Cheryl. I know you don't mean that. You don't want to hurt your friend."

Cheryl: "Yes, I do. And she's not my friend. She's mean!"

Parent: "Maybe you haven't been very nice to Judy. Did you do something to make her angry?"

Cheryl: "No, she's just mean. It's all her fault."

Parent: "Now, Cheryl, nothing is ever the fault of just one person. Usually both people are to blame. Why don't you invite Judy over and you can have some lemonade and be friends again."

Cheryl: "I don't wanna be friends with Judy. And I don't want her to come to my house. I hate her!"

Parent: "Cheryl, I asked you not to talk like that. I think you're just cranky and tired. Now go upstairs to bed, and maybe after you have a nap you'll feel better."

Have parents note how the parent made decisions and judgments about Cheryl's behavior before she even knew what was bothering Cheryl. The parent never did find out exactly what was on Cheryl's mind.

How can parents become better listeners?

Do you think it takes special training to be able to listen well to children?

What are some ways you can show your children that you have heard what they said?

Comments: Observing and listening to children, and understanding what they are trying to say, is largely a matter of instinct and common sense.

Some parents may be familiar with the technique of active listening, as originally introduced by Dr. Thomas Gordon and since taken up by others. In his book, *P. E. T., Parent Effectiveness Training*, Dr. Gordon mentions several different ways in which parents can let children know they're being heard:

Sometimes responses like "Oh" or "I see" are enough.

At other times children may need some encouragement to continue — such as "Tell me more" or "Go on, I'm listening."

An alert silence can often let children know that a parent is listening closely and thinking about what is being said.

Once in a while a parent may have to ask questions or repeat the child's questions to be sure he or she understood what was being said.

As an illustration of how these different strategies can be used, hand out copies of "Listening and Learning" (page 125). Have parents compare this conversation with the one in the preceding activity.

PARENTING STYLES: AVOIDING THE EXTREMES

The Accident

Styles in parenting are in a state of flux. Things our parents and grandparents took for granted seem unclear and uncertain to many of us. Parents may raise their own children one way, but see and hear about many other approaches in the homes of friends, on TV, in books and magazines, and in classrooms and parent groups. No wonder many parents are confused.

It's comforting to know, then, that there is no one right way to behave as a parent, just as there is no one correct way to be a child. There are, however, extreme approaches to childrearing that are, as the posters used to say about war, "not healthy for children and other living things." In parenting, as in many other areas, moderation is the best rule.

THE BIG IDEAS

Children need to be permitted to explore the world and move about freely.

Children also need to be protected from hurting themselves and other people.

A parenting style that strikes a balance — in other words, that is neither overpermissive nor overprotective — is most likely to enhance children's growth.

A TWO-SIDED STORY

Am I being too strict with my kids?

OR

Do I let them get away with too much?

Questions such as these are very real to most new parents. Even many experienced parents never feel completely comfortable about how they're raising their children. One of the concerns that many parents have, for example, is whether to take a permissive or protective approach toward raising their children.

Actually, parents should do both. Past experience and present knowledge show that choosing an effective parenting style is not a question of "either-or." It is a matter of finding a comfortable balance. Children need to be *both* permitted and protected — but not too much.

THE CASE FOR PERMISSIVENESS

ON THE ONE HAND...

Children need freedom. They need to be permitted — even encouraged — to explore the world, to use their senses, and to move about freely. Opportunities such as these give children the freedom to grow in all areas. Children also need to make choices, to take on responsibility, and to freely express their ideas and wishes — even to say "no" now and then. When parents permit children to do things for themselves — even when parents could do it better or faster — they help children most.

Permissiveness, then, is giving children the freedom they need to grow within the bounds of safety and regard for others.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...

Too much freedom overwhelms children. Children do not need the freedom to destroy property, to act on all their impulses, or to hurt themselves or others. This is no longer permissiveness. This is indulgence. Such indulged children often become self-centered. They have trouble getting along with others, because they are used to having things their own way. In addition, when parents let children do anything they want, children feel abandoned. It's frightening to think that no one will stop you if you get out of control.

Freedom does not mean license.

THE CASE FOR PROTECTIVENESS

ON THE ONE HAND...

Children need limits. They want guidance, regularity, and routine. When parents protect their children from hurting themselves and others, parents help children feel secure. Children need an environment — both indoors and out — that is safe to explore. They also need clear limits on their behavior. Children have to learn which behaviors are acceptable and which are not. Without this knowledge, they are ill-prepared for life in the real world.

Protection is setting reasonable rules for children's safety and behavior.

BUT ON THE OTHER HAND...

Too many limits smother children. Children do not need to be overdirected, overstructured, or told how to do everything. Such restrictions interfere with children's growth. When parents hold onto children too tightly, they may save them from physical harm, but harm their spirit. Sometimes children have to learn the painful way. If parents do everything for a child, what will the child do later on when there is no one around?

Protection does not mean imprisonment.

BETWEEN THE EXTREMES

How parents raise their children will depend on themselves, their children, and different situations. Some parents feel comfortable with parenting styles that other parents find too tight or too loose in fit. Some children can handle more freedom and responsibility than others. And some situations call for more control than others.

There are few absolutes when it comes to parenting styles — but some general guidelines are helpful:

Give children permission to grow and protection from harm

Children need strong parents who are actively involved in their lives, but who respect the children's freedom and dignity.

Stay away from the extremes of overprotection and overpermissiveness

Neither extreme is in the best interests of children. Either one can lead to resentment, hostility, and even delinquent behavior.

Just where parents are between the extremes is not of major importance. What is important is that their style of parenting be reasonable and motivated by love and respect for their children. Between the extremes are many approaches that make room both for parents' sanity and their children's growth.

For Further Information...

Baby and Child Care. Benjamin Spock, M.D. New York: Pocket Books, 1976. (paperback)

Black Child Care. James P. Comer, M.D., and Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D. New York: Pocket Books, 1975. (paperback)

How to Parent. Dr. Fitzhugh Dodson. New York: Signet, 1970. (paperback)

Your Child's Self-Esteem. Dorothy Corkille Briggs. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970. (paperback)

THE

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

You give him a choice of two or three items each day, and leave plenty of time for him to dress himself — standing by to help if he needs it.

You let him wear anything he wants, even if it's inappropriate, and leave him to dance himself, even if his shirt is inside out and his shoes are on the wrong feet.

THE PROGRAM

The Accident

Characters:

Bob Hornbrenner — a young divorced father
Sheila Hornbrenner — Bob's ex-wife
April Hornbrenner — 18-month-old daughter of Sheila and Bob
Bill Hall — Sheila's current date
Bonnie Hornbrenner — Bob's mother
Hank Hornbrenner — Bob's brother
Sandy and David Orloff — friends of Sheila
Buddy and Sally Orloff — their children
Jackie Summer — the car vandal

Drama:

April Hornbrenner has fallen off the merry-go-round at a playground, and Bob and his mother are rushing her to the hospital. April is crying and Bob looks concerned. At the hospital a doctor examines April and says that she probably just has a mild concussion. Bob calls Sheila to tell her.

Sheila has been making dinner at her place for Bill and her friends the Orloffs. Mrs. Orloff, we notice, keeps very tight reins on her children, helping 6-year-old Buddy cut his meat and showing 3-year-old Sally how to put a puzzle together right. When Sandy receives the call from Bob, she has the Orloffs drive her to the hospital. She appears overwrought, blaming Bob for April's accident. When she arrives at the hospital, she tells Bob angrily that she knew this would happen sooner or later, because he takes too many chances with April. Bob, who has already been blaming himself for letting his 7-year-old niece take April on the merry-go-round, leaves angrily. Sheila spends the night at the hospital with April.

As Bob approaches his car, he finds a young boy vandalizing it. In trying to reach the boy's parents, he learns that they let Jackie "just run wild." Back at his mother's house, he stewes over what Sheila said to him that day, and tells his brother Hank that if anyone has a bad parenting style, it's Sheila. Sheila is too careful with April, claims Bob.

The next morning, Bob drives Sheila and April home from the hospital. Sheila is relaxed now and apologizes for what she said the night before. When Bob wants to talk about the difference in their attitudes toward childrearing, Sheila appears to think there is nothing to talk about. When Bob suggests that Sheila is overprotective, however, she sees that she is still philosophically opposed to Bob.

Documentary:

Members of a parent group discuss their concerns about being too protective or too permissive with their children. The consensus of the group is that, difficult though it may be, it is in the child's best interest for parents to strike a balance between these two extremes.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Put the following continuum on the chalkboard or a large piece of paper.



Describe Protective Pete as a parent who believes that children need to be totally guided and restricted. He never lets his children out of sight for a moment. They eat and sleep according to a regimen that would make the military proud. Whenever any child in the neighborhood has the sniffles, Pete's children stay home so they don't catch a cold.

Then characterize Permissive Patricia as a parent who believes that children should be given complete freedom to grow and develop. She believes that any restrictions inhibit children's development. She lets her children eat and go to bed whenever they want. They wear whatever they like, even if it's sandals in the middle of winter.

Ask parents to put their names or initials under the line on the continuum where they think they belong, and ask them:

Are you happy where you are?
Is it OK to be anywhere on the line?
Is there a best place to be?

OR

Ask parents if they ever worry about how they're raising their children:

Do you wonder sometimes if you're being too protective or too permissive?

Do you think your parents felt sure about how they raised you?
Why do you think so many parents are confused today about their approach to childrearing?

Point out that part of the reason for this confusion is that our knowledge about and attitudes toward raising children have changed drastically in the past century. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, children were seen as lumps of clay to be molded into a certain shape.

This was the Victorian age — the heyday of “spare the rod and spoil the child” and “children should be seen and not heard.”

Then, as knowledge about children began to grow, attitudes toward them began to soften. Children were no longer seen as miniature adults, and parents were encouraged to be more permissive.

However, as often happens when a change in attitude takes place, some parents overreacted. The sound idea that children need freedom to explore the world was interpreted by some to mean “children should be allowed to do anything they want.” It’s no wonder that permissiveness has become almost a dirty word today, and that so many parents are unsure about what is best for their children.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to think about these two questions as they view *The Accident*:

How do Bob and Sheila differ in their ideas about how much freedom is best for a child?

What examples of overprotectiveness and overpermissiveness do you see in the film?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Was Bob overpermissive?

Why did Sheila think he was careless? Do you agree with her?
Would you have permitted April to go on the merry-go-round?
Do you think the same thing might have happened to April if Sheila had been with her?
Do you think men are generally more permissive than women?

Comments: If parenting styles can be viewed as a continuum with one end being overprotective and the other overpermissive, Bob would be closer to the latter end. When Bob was with April, for example, he let her move about fairly freely, just keeping a distant eye on her. He entrusted her to the care of his young niece.

Bob, however, was not as extreme as Sheila believed. He did not appear to be an irresponsible parent who let his child run completely free.

Was Sheila overprotective?

Why did Bob think she was too careful? Do you agree?
Can you be “too careful” with a child?

Comments: Sheila was closer to the overprotective end of the spectrum. For example, she was concerned that Bob often brought April

home dirty, and once even with a cut on her knee. Bob also related how upset Sheila was one time when he put April down in a department store and allowed her to poke around.

However, Sheila's parenting style was not extreme either. She was not a mother who refused to allow her child to do or try anything.

Will Sheila and Bob be able to resolve their differences in attitude toward raising April?

Did they each have an accurate perception of what the other person really believed?

How much of their disagreement do you think was due to differences in opinion, and how much to the tension of the situation?

Do you think Sheila took Bob's comment that she was overprotective seriously?

What can parents do when they disagree in their approach to child-rearing?

Comments: Sheila and Bob each thought that his/her position, to the left or right of center, was the best one. Probably neither, however, was as far to the right or left as the other believed. Their differences probably could be reconciled and a balance attained. It would be a good idea if they came to some agreement before April gets older, so that she will not be placed in the middle.

Were there some examples in the film where parents were clearly overprotective or overpermissive?

Do you think Sheila's friend Sandy was overprotective?

What effects do you suppose Sandy's parenting style were having on her two children?

Do you think that the parents of the boy who vandalized Bob's car gave their child too much freedom?

What do you suppose this boy will be like when he gets older if his parents don't change their style?

Comments: Sandy Orloff was clearly overprotective of her two children. For example, she:

insisted on cutting up her 6-year-old son's meat
stepped in and put together her 3-year-old daughter's puzzle for her.

The effects of Sandy's restrictiveness are already evident: both of her children tend to whine a lot and look to their mother to do things for them.

Jackie, the 7-year-old boy who broke into Bob's car, has essentially been abandoned by his parents. Without anyone to set or enforce any limits on his behavior, Jackie seems to be headed toward a career of crime. His need for someone to guide him and help him to

control his behavior is indicated by his responsiveness to Bob's firm demands.

What were some of the concerns expressed by the parents in the documentary?

Was the father who wouldn't let his daughter go in the kitchen being overprotective?

What consequences of overprotectiveness and overpermissiveness were mentioned?

To what did the group leader attribute parents' anxieties?

Comments: The parents in the group wanted their children to be safe, enthusiastic, strong, and competent. They wanted them to have opportunities to explore the environment, to learn new skills, and to trust people. The parents agreed that neither overprotectiveness nor overpermissiveness allows for all these things. The leader pointed out that much of the anxiety parents experience results from the belief that there is one right way to raise a child — which, of course, there is not.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss the ways they were raised.

Do you think your parents were too strict or too lenient?

How do you think their childrearing methods affected you?

Are you raising your children differently from the way you were raised? Why or why not?

Comments: The purpose of these questions is to help parents see how their own style of parenting may have been influenced by that of their parents, so that they can begin to settle on a style that is most comfortable for them. Many of us adopt the style of our parents. Even in the face of new knowledge about children, some parents cling stubbornly to the old ways: "What was good enough for me is good enough for my children."

Other parents, unhappy with the way they were raised, take a different approach to raising children than their parents. In some cases, parents may even overreact, going to the opposite extreme of their parents.

Ask parents to discuss their own ideas about overpermissiveness and overprotectiveness.

How would you define overprotectiveness? What are some examples of being overprotective?

How would you define overpermissiveness? What are some examples of being overpermissive?

What are some possible effects of being too protective? Do you know any children who have been overprotected? What are they like?

What are some likely outcomes of being too permissive? Do you know any children who have been given too much freedom? What are they like?

What might be some of the reasons for a parent being too restrictive or too indulgent?

Are parents more protective of certain children — for example, girls, first-born children, children with handicaps, or seriously ill children? Should they be?

Do you think parents are likely to overprotect their children in the name of loving them?

Comments: Parents are being overprotective when they do not give their children the freedom they need to explore the world and to learn about themselves and other people. Such restricted children are likely to lack confidence in themselves and may withdraw from the world and other people. Parents may be too protective out of concern for their children's welfare, or they may just think that children can't do things for themselves. In either case, overprotectiveness stunts children's growth.

Parents are being too permissive when they adopt an "anything goes" attitude, thus virtually abandoning their children. Such indulged children often lack feelings of security and self-worth and try to compensate by drawing attention to themselves through selfish or aggressive behavior. Some parents may be overpermissive because they fear their children won't love them if they say "no." Others may want their children to be able to do all the things they were never able to do. In any case, parents are kinder to children, and children respect them more, when they set and enforce some limits.

You might at this point hand out copies of "A Balancing Act" (page 138). Have parents discuss the four situations on this sheet, and suggest other possible approaches to each one. You could also present and discuss some additional situations, and have parents suggest extreme and balanced approaches to each. For example:

Your 2-year-old wants to go on the playground equipment alone.

Your 4-year-old gets hungry between meals sometimes.

Your 5-year-old hates to go to bed.

You could have parents give examples of the kinds of situations that trouble them, and have the group come up with possible approaches.

Have parents discuss the relationship between safety and the amount of freedom children are given.

Are children more likely to get hurt if they are given lots of freedom?

Are overprotected children less likely to be seriously injured?

How do children learn what is safe for them?

How can parents let children explore and protect them at the same time?

Comments: Children are very vulnerable to accidents. In fact, accidents are the leading cause of death and injury in young children. Children need to be protected from serious falls, household poisons, electrical outlets, etc. Contrary to what some parents might expect, however, overprotection is not the best way to protect children.

Children who are given a reasonable amount of freedom to explore the world at an early age and on a regular basis seem to develop a remarkable sense of what is safe for them. Often the children most susceptible to serious injury are the ones who have been too restricted.

For example, when children have been climbing trees since they could barely hang onto the lowest limb, they quickly learn how far up they can safely go. There may have been a few scrapes and scratches, but probably no serious falls. When, on the other hand, children have not been allowed to climb, they are more likely to climb too high and be seriously injured when left on their own.

By letting children learn to trust their own bodies, then, parents help to keep them safe. If parents never let their children develop a sense of danger, children are more likely to get hurt when their parents aren't around.

How do you decide which parenting style is best for you?

How do you find and keep your balance?

What factors contribute to the choice of a parenting style? Does the age and temperament of the child make a difference? The situation?

Comments: Fortunately, children thrive under many different styles of parenting. Parents can choose a style based on what they feel is best for them and their children.

Parents have different personalities and life styles. Some are more easy-going, some more strict. In the same way, certain children need to be held by tighter reins; others need more slack. Age makes a difference, too. As children grow older and become more responsible, parents can gradually let out the reins. Some things that cannot be permitted at 2 can be permitted at 5.

And certain situations call for more or less protectiveness than others. There are some situations where parents cannot be flexible. They cannot allow children to hurt themselves or others, for example, or to commit an illegal act. At other times, when children are coping with a special stress, such as moving, illness, death, or divorce, parents may be more permissive.

SOCIAL SKILLS: MORE THAN MANNERS

New Kid on the Block

Getting along with other people is the heart of living. Knowing how to interact with others is necessary for being part of any group — family, neighborhood, school, job, or community organization. Through each new encounter, we stretch our understanding of ourselves and others. Being able to understand and reach out to others makes us feel needed and competent, a part of the group and uniquely special — alive.

We are not born with social skills, but we're born with a need to love and be loved. Learning how to get along with others is a process that begins at birth and continues throughout life.

THE BIG IDEAS

Social skills are more than manners; they are the basic tools needed for getting along with other people.

At first children think only of themselves. They have to learn to see the point of view of others.

Parents can help their children learn social skills by their example, by direct instruction, and by giving them experiences with other people.

FROM "ME" TO "US"

Babies begin to respond to other people from the very first hours of life. They are truly social beings. One look from their parents and babies begin to wiggle all over.

Being responsive to others, however, is a far cry from knowing how to consider their rights or wishes. Babies come into the world thinking they are the center of the universe. From their point of view, when they're wet and hungry that's all that matters. They are unaware of the feelings and needs of others.

In time children discover that other people's feelings and needs may conflict with their own. Although babies expect instant service, they have to wait. Toddlers want everything they see, but they have to learn to respect other people's property. It's hard to hold their own desires in check and consider the feelings of others. Sometimes it's hard for children to make a place in a new group.

Because of their pleasure in being with others and their need to be accepted and loved, however, children want to learn these lessons. They begin to be able to wait for others, to express anger in appropriate ways, and to share with other people. These learnings may be painful at times, but they have powerful rewards — such as making a new friend or being included in the neighborhood group.

THE WIDENING CIRCLE

*Parents are always teaching social skills through their own example. Children watch their parents carefully, absorbing how their parents behave with them, with each other and with friends, relatives, and strangers. How often have you heard children use the very same words and tone of voice as their parents? **

In addition to teaching through their own example, parents can:

Give Children Experiences With Different Adults and Children

Children need to interact with other people to learn to get along with them: parents' advice means little without this real experience. Parents can include children in activities and conversations with other grown-ups and arrange for them to play with other children on a regular basis at home, in a cooperative play group, or in a park.

Help Children Interpret the Ways

People Communicate Without Using Words

Learning how to "read" other people — their tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and actions — helps children begin to see the point of view of others. Their parents can help by pointing out another person's intentions: "Karl's giving you part of his cookie. He's showing that he likes you." A parent can also encourage a child to make his or her own observations of people.

Tell Children How They Should Act

in Specific Situations and Tell Them Why

Sometimes a child wants to show an interest in another child, but does not know how. For instance, a toddler may not know how rough she is

when she greets another child. Her mother helps by saying: "Kathy, you hurt Amy when you push her. Give a hug like this."

Sometimes children need help dealing with difficult situations. Parents can often help preschoolers anticipate these situations and plan how they should act: "Troy, when Uncle Junior comes, he'll sleep in your room and you'll sleep in Annie's room. Giving him a night in your room shows we feel he's special." A toddler, however, usually needs help right on the spot when such situations occur.

Praise Children When They Use Social Skills

A smile, a hug or a word can mean so much to children who are struggling to consider other people's wishes as well as their own.

Parents can show children that other people appreciate an act of kindness too: "Aunt Doriñda said that you helped make the beds. That was very thoughtful. I'm very proud of you."

Don't Expect Too Much Too Soon

Children want to get along with others. Thinking in terms of "us" rather than "me" is hard, however. It's difficult to share a favorite toy all day, and who can wait for a turn on a swing when he or she doesn't know what "five minutes" means?

Parents, therefore, can't expect a child to be consistent — to remember to share or wait all the time. Nor can they expect children to talk rather than hit before they learn to use words.

Although parents will experience ups and downs in teaching social skills, they too will enjoy rewards. Hearing that first laugh, receiving that painting all in red ("I made it for you!"), and watching that child communicate and make friends is a wonderful experience for the parent.

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THE PROGRAM

New Kid on the Block

Characters:

Ted Marshall — a young father

Sandy Marshall — Ted's wife

Marc Marshall — 5-year-old son of Sandy and Ted

Portia Marshall — Marc's 3-year-old sister

Mavis Herlihy — a widowed neighbor

Billy, Peter and Elise Herlihy — Mavis' children

Drama:

The Marshalls have moved into a newly renovated townhouse in an old city neighborhood. When they arrive, none of their neighbors acknowledge them and Sandy begins to feel uneasy.

Ted encourages Marc to meet the other children on the block. When Marc introduces himself, the children start to play "the dozens" with him. Marc doesn't know how to play and retreats to his house. Sandy discusses the incident with him, but for the rest of the week he plays alone rather than face the other children.

One day, Sandy, Marc and Portia see Mavis and her children in the store. Sandy introduces herself despite Mavis' attempts to avoid her. A few days later Elise enters the Marshall yard and Portia invites her to play. When Mavis arrives, looking for Elise, Sandy invites her in for coffee, and asks her to explain the neighbors' hostility toward them. Their daughters, now friends, join them.

That same afternoon Ted greets the neighborhood men on his way home from work. No one responds. When Ted arrives home, Mavis is still there. Sandy asks her to explain to Ted the neighbors' fear that they will be pushed out of the neighborhood by the Marshalls and other home owners who are buying up the homes they are renting.

With this knowledge, Ted introduces himself and Marc to the group of men Ted greeted earlier. He shows that he understands their worry. Watching how his father interacts with the men, Marc joins the children. He shows he has learned to play "the dozens" and makes a place for himself in a new group of people.

Documentary:

Parents talk about the development of social skills in their children and why they think that it's important to develop these skills. Children are shown expressing the skills of sharing, empathy and assertion.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Have parents name some social skills and discuss the difference between social skills and manners. Manners are agreed-upon ways that people of a particular culture or group speak and act. Social skills are universal responses that express basic attitudes toward others. Saying "please" or holding a door for someone else are manners. Social skills are such things as:

showing interest and friendliness toward others
giving and receiving gracefully
asserting our needs and rights in appropriate ways
showing consideration and sympathy
communicating effectively.

Show parents pictures of people in different social situations — children in a classroom, a family at home, people on a bus, visitors in a foreign country, workers in an office. Have parents discuss the social skills a person needs in these situations.

OR

Ask parents to name some social skills that their children have, and explain how they learned them. Encourage parents to discuss:

when children begin to learn social skills
where and from whom they learn social skills.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to look for answers to the following questions as they view *New Kid on the Block*:

What social skills do Marc and Portia need in this new situation?
How do Marc and Portia's parents help them?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Why were the neighbors hostile to the Marshall family?

Are conflicts like this common?
Why was Mavis particularly hostile?
Were the neighborhood children hostile or just treating Marc like any new child?
What social patterns were the neighborhood children learning from their parents?
Have you or your children ever had a similar experience?

Comments: Ted and Sandy learned that the neighbors feared they would be pushed out of the neighborhood by the Marshalls and other home owners who were buying up the homes the neighbors were renting. This was the only stated reason; parents may think there are other reasons for their hostility — such as racial, economic, or social differences.

Some parents may feel that the neighborhood children were not hostile towards Marc, but unaccepting of him until he proved that he could be one of them (by mastering "the dozens"). Others may feel that the children were affected by their parents' hostility.

What social skills did Marc and Portia need in this new situation?

Did Ted and Sandy put them into a situation that was too hard for them to handle?

How did Marc and Portia deal with the situation?

Do you think Marc and Portia are more socially skilled than most children their ages?

How do parents know which social skills their children need?

Comments: Moving into a new neighborhood brought Marc and Portia a big challenge. They needed to learn such things as:

how to fit into a new group of people

that it takes time to establish oneself in a new group of people

that different groups of people don't always act or react in the same way

Marc and Portia handled themselves remarkably well in this situation. In fact, many parents may feel that Marc and Portia are more socially adept than most children their age.

How did Marc and Portia's parents help them?

What were some different methods that Ted used to teach social skills to Marc and Portia? Were they effective?

What methods did Sandy use?

What were the social skills that Ted and Sandy used to get along with their neighbors?

What was Sandy trying to teach Marc through "the dozens"?

In her place, would you have taught Marc "the dozens"?

If you were Ted or Sandy, what might you have done to help your children deal with this situation?

Comments: Sandy and Ted passed on social skills to Marc and Portia by:

Modeling behavior

Ted showed Marc how to respond in a sensitive way to the feelings of the neighborhood men.

Sandy showed Marc and Portia how to assert themselves with others when she confronted Mavis in the store.

Sandy showed Portia how to be hospitable as well as assertive when she talked with Mavis in the Marshall home.

Interpreting other people's behavior

Sandy explained "the dozens" to Marc and helped him understand the social situation.

Telling children how to act and why

Ted told Marc how to introduce himself to the neighborhood children.

Sandy told Marc to rejoin the neighborhood children and show them that he could fit in their group. She taught him "the dozens" to help him fit in.

How did the parents in the documentary teach their children social skills?

What different skills were the parents helping children learn?

How, for instance, did one mother teach social skills during a daily routine?

Comments: The children, with their parents' assistance, worked on skills of sharing, taking an interest in others, relating to other people, and asserting their rights. The parents used opportunities that ranged from playground settings to dinner table conversation as a forum for teaching social skills.

Parents taught their children social skills by:

modeling social skills

giving their children opportunities to interact with other children and adults

telling children how they should act and explaining why
praising children for using social skills.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss some social skills they want their children to have for school and other group situations.

What are some social skills you especially want your children to have?
Why did you choose these particular skills?

Comments: Encourage parents to describe what they mean by each social skill and why the particular skill is important to them.

Some parents may confuse manners with social skills. While they are inter-related, "manners" are a way of expressing basic attitudes toward others. To distinguish the two, you may want to create a chart with manners on one side and the basic attitudes they reflect on the other:

<u>Manners</u>	<u>Basic Social Attitudes</u>
Holding the door for another person	Showing thoughtfulness and respect
Saying "pardon me" rather than pushing	Asserting our needs and rights in appropriate ways

Parents may value particular manners for different reasons. They may teach certain manners to their children because of:

- their personal values
- their ethnic background
- their religion
- the sex of their child
- the social customs of the neighborhood
- the school their children attend

Make sure parents see that although specific behaviors vary from one group to another, manners communicate the same basic feelings. In the Hopi culture, for instance, children are taught to look down when spoken to. Most Anglo-American children, on the other hand, are taught to look directly at the speaker. Both manners, however, are a means of showing respect.

At what age do children learn social skills?

Are children born knowing social skills?

Why do young children sometimes have difficulty learning how to get along with other people?

At what ages do you expect your children to begin learning social skills? What can you expect from a baby? A toddler? A preschooler?

Comments: Most parents expect different things from children of different ages, but many expect too much too soon.

It may be helpful to start the discussion by having parents describe how children of different ages get along with other children and adults. You might make a chart outlining children's social development as you go along. As you discuss children's abilities, discuss realistic expectations that parents can have for children at each age. Afterwards, give parents a copy of "Social Security for Children" (page 150) as a summary of the discussion.

Have parents talk about the different kinds of people they want their children to be able to get along with.

What experiences have your own children had with different kinds of people? How have these experiences affected them?

Do they need special social skills to get along with different kinds of people?

Can children learn how to get along with people who are different from them just by watching a television program?

Comments: Some parents worry that outside social pressures will make their children reject family values and manners. Because of this, some parents let their children play only with children whose parents share the same values.

Other parents feel it's important to let their children get to know people of all ages and from different ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds. By playing together on a regular basis and making friends, children learn to see children from different backgrounds as individuals. Without interaction, it may be more difficult for children to be comfortable with different kinds of people.

A rural or suburban community may include only people of similar backgrounds and interests. Parents may have to go out of their way to let children know that others have values and customs that are different. Metropolitan areas are more diverse, but even in cities, it is easy for people to segregate themselves within their own neighborhoods. Besides enrolling their children in groups where they can meet different kinds of people, parents can introduce children to different cultural groups through books, television, and visits to more diverse communities.

Have parents discuss how they plan a group experience for their children.

How do group situations affect your children's social skills?

What kinds of things do you need to keep in mind when you plan a group experience for young children?

How would you plan a birthday party? A trip to the zoo?

What other social situations do you need to plan for?

Comments: General guidelines for planning a group experience for young children include:

Plan things for children to do.

Provide materials for each child.

Limit the number of children.

Make sure there are enough adults.

Balance activities — quiet with noisy, passive with active.

Give children an idea of what they're going to do and any rules for behavior before they begin an activity.

For example, in planning a birthday party, parents might limit the number of children to a selected few — only 3 for a 3-year-old, 4 for a 4-year-old, and so on.

They could also let each child help prepare the refreshments — frost the cupcake or add a spoonful of lemonade mix to a glass.

Have parents suggest toys and outdoor equipment that encourage children to play together and develop social skills.

Some suggestions might be:

materials that can be used in many ways by children of varying abilities — for example, sand, water, and blocks
materials that encourage building and pretending — for example, large cardboard boxes, blankets, and pillows
equipment built for several children — for example, see-saws, rocking boats, and merry-go-rounds

Parents can also arrange space in the house and yard so that children have a place to entertain other children as Portia did — for example, provide low steps, a sandbox, or other places for play.

(See also the units on *The Need for Early Stimulation, Creativity and Play and Fantasy*.)

GROWING UP: CHILDREN DO THEIR BEST

The Scratching Pole

There are times when parents just don't understand their children. They lose patience, even their sense of humor.

However, if parents find out what their children are trying to accomplish, they'll see that children really want to grow up — and those baffling and irritating behaviors are often their best efforts.

THE BIG IDEAS

Children work at life's tasks as hard and as wisely as they know how.

At times, their "best efforts" at growing up are not easy for parents to live with.

By recognizing the life tasks their children are trying to accomplish, parents can be more supportive of their children's growth.

THE AIM'S THE SAME

Parents want their children to learn and grow — and that's exactly what they're trying to do. They don't have to be pushed and prodded. They are born with the urge to move forward. Normal development compels them to work on developmental tasks — for example, to:

gain control over their bodies
communicate with others

get along with other people
become independent
learn who they are and who they can become
think and solve problems
form values and beliefs.

They can't, however, master these tasks in a day. There are certain things to learn and appropriate ways to act at each age — whether it's 2, 12, or 22. Each step forward builds on the ones before. Children hold their heads up before they sit, cry before they talk, hoard things before they share them.

Although everyone works at life's tasks, the urge to grow and change seems strongest in children. They approach these tasks with zest and ingenuity. Somehow they find a way to work at them at any time and any place. Three-year-old Bobby can't be stopped. He wants to understand who he is and who he can become, so he imitates every move his father makes. He's in the kitchen getting breakfast or in the driveway "washing" the car. He dresses up in his father's clothes and wants to sit in grown-up chairs.

GROWING PAINS

Sometimes the ways children go about working at these tasks are not easy to live with. Learning involves trial and error. In learning to get along with others, for instance, children test people out. They pinch and tease as well as smile and hug. In trying to be independent, children go overboard. They may say "no" to everything. Squabbles are inevitable. Such conflicts can be annoying, but they're a healthy and important part of learning. They're children's best efforts.

It's hard, too, for children to keep grown-up rules in mind when they're practicing a new skill. Beds look perfect for jumping. Toothpaste asks to be squeezed. Children are just learning to predict what will happen and what can go wrong. They're discovering how things work and how much they can do. Children make mistakes, naturally — but at the moment they just don't know there are better ways.

GROWING TOGETHER

Growing up takes a lot of time and energy. Each of the developmental tasks takes time and patience. Parents can ease the way, though, by keeping in mind these guidelines:

Look Behind Children's Behaviors and Try to Discover What Life Tasks They Are Working on.

Parents can observe children's behaviors carefully and try to interpret them. Babies who pull hair, for instance, are probably not trying to

hurt anyone. Touching other people helps them understand that they are physically separate from other people. It can be seen as a very beginning step toward the task of becoming independent from parents and other people.

If There's a Better Way to Accomplish a Task, Help Children Find It.

Parents can recognize children's needs and help them find an easier or more acceptable way to accomplish a task. Children need to see that there are other ways to settle disagreements besides pinching and teasing. Parents can ask children to think of alternatives — such as taking turns or planning something that two can do together. By doing this, parents can help children accomplish what they are really trying to learn — to get along with others.

If There's No Better Way, Try to Live with The Behavior. Many Times It Will Be Outgrown.

Sometimes when parents understand a behavior, it doesn't seem as irritating. They can be more patient with their toddlers' endless questions, for example, if they know that this is the way toddlers learn new words and become part of the conversation. Sometimes parents can help children find other ways to practice tasks: allowing your child to jump on an old tire in the backyard can meet his need to practice jumping — and it can save your living room sofa!

Sometimes, though, parents may just have to be patient while their children master a task. For instance, parents may have to live with smeared food, spilled milk, and sticky hands and faces while their babies are learning how to feed themselves. At such times it helps to remember that children do grow up and become easier to live with.

Parents, then, can act as guides. They build upon their children's eagerness to grow up. From time to time parents help by pointing out the way or getting children over a difficult spot.

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THE LIFE TASKS

There are many instances of young children behaving when they're trying to grow up. In each case, note what task children are working on, and think about how this knowledge might change your attitude and response to their behavior.

Infancy

When infants...	This may help them...	To master the life task...
Bring knees, pull hair, point, grab your glasses and earrings	See themselves as physically separate from other people	Become independent from parents and other adults
Cry for every want or, later, demand, when have something and lose it as well	Express themselves in many ways	Communicate with others
Throw their cups and toys on the floor	Learn about cause and effect	Learn to think logically

Toddler

When toddlers...	This may help them...	To master the life task...
Act constantly in motion — sucking, crawling and poking, looking, jumping on sofa and bed	Develop large and small muscle control	Gain control over their bodies
Ask questions such as "What's that?" and "Why?"	Learn words and get attention	Communicate with others
"Get into" parents' pants, shoes, lipstick, and watch their parents' actions	Learn what it means to be a grown-up	Learn who they are and who they can become

Preschooler

When preschoolers...	This may help them...	To master the life task...
Hit, threaten, call names, take toys and exclude other children	Play with others but still get their own way	Get along with others
Refuse your help getting dressed, even if they put their clothes on backwards or inside out	Learn how to dress and take care of themselves	Become independent
Make forts and houses with household furniture, blankets or pillows	Use and interpret symbols that stand for real objects, events, or people	Think and solve problems

THE PROGRAM

The Scratching Pole

Characters:

Maggie Sanchez — A young mother

Joe Sanchez — Maggie's husband

Christina Sanchez — Maggie and Joe's 4-year-old daughter

Tio Daniel — Maggie's uncle

Cindy — Maggie's sister

Ed Plunkett — Joe's partner

Billy Gumdrop — A vagrant arrested by Joe

Drama:

When Joe arrives home from work, Christina keeps asking him to play catch. Irritated, he refuses. Entering the house, he learns that Maggie has bought an armchair on sale. Joe is upset because he doesn't think that they have enough money to afford such a luxury. Just when Maggie and Joe agree to return the chair, Christina throws Joe the ball and accidentally hits Joe's beer can. Beer spills all over the chair. Joe gets so angry that he spansks Christina. To make matters worse, Tio Daniel's kitten claws the side of the new chair.

That night Joe works late studying a police regulations manual so he can get a transfer that will bring in more overtime money. Early the next morning he is wakened by Christina, who is throwing her ball against the stairs. Joe gets mad and puts her ball high on a closet shelf.

At work, Joe asks his sergeant to recommend a transfer. The officer does so reluctantly, because he feels that Joe needs more experience. While Joe and Ed are on their beat, Joe insists on making a difficult arrest to prove himself. When Billy Gumdrop, the vagrant Joe arrests, makes a racial slur at Joe, Joe loses his temper and shoves Billy against a building. Back at the station, Joe is reprimanded.

Meanwhile, Maggie talks with Cindy. Just after Maggie says Joe should be more patient with Christina, Christina accidentally throws her ball and hits one of Maggie's best dishes. It shatters. Maggie scolds Christina and sends her outside. This incident makes Maggie doubt her ideas.

When Joe comes home, Tio Daniel shows him a scratching pole that he has made so that the kitten has something besides the new chair on which to test his claws. Joe wryly comments that he needs a scratching pole, too. When Christina runs up and throws Joe her ball this time, he is much more understanding of her need to practice throwing and offers to help her practice outside.

Documentary:

Dr. James L. Hymes, Jr., says that children work on the tasks of growing up in the best ways that they know. He assures parents that many behaviors that are puzzling to them or appear to be without purpose are actually children's attempts at growing up.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Ask parents to think of things that children have to learn in order to become independent, mature adults. Once several skills or abilities have been given, point out that parents have thought of some developmental tasks. A developmental task is a challenge that arises during a certain period of a person's life. People accomplish many such tasks in the process of growing up.

Ask parents to think about who or what determines the developmental tasks that people work on. In general, there are human tasks that everyone works on so they can survive in the world. We all try to control our bodies, become independent, think and solve problems, for example.

Some tasks are shaped and altered by the culture in which we live. In our culture, for example, learning to think involves understanding symbols such as alphabet letters, road signs, and numerals.

Tasks are also shaped by each person's needs, values, and aspirations. Because of a hearing loss, a child may learn sign language and lip reading. A child interested in music may learn to read musical notation.

OR

Show parents pictures of children doing things that might irritate or confuse parents. For example, the pictures could show children jumping on a bed, children muddy from playing ball, babies messy from trying to feed themselves, or toddlers "into everything." (If you can't find any such pictures, you could write short paragraphs that depict the same situations.) When you show these pictures, ask parents:

What's your feeling when you see your children do something like that?

Do you think children purposely try to get dirty or to be messy or noisy at every opportunity?

What do you imagine the children in these pictures were really concentrating on and trying to learn when they got so messy?

Explain the concept of developmental tasks. Talk about looking behind children's overt behaviors and discovering the developmental tasks they are working on.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind two questions while they view *The Scratching Pole*:

*What developmental task or tasks was Christina trying to accomplish?
How did the others help or hinder Christina's efforts?*

Do you notice development tasks beings worked on by others in the show?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What were the developmental tasks that were worked on in the show?

What developmental tasks was Christina working on?

What developmental tasks did you notice Joe working on?

What about the kitten?

What behaviors gave you clues that these characters were working on developmental tasks?

What did they need in order to work on these tasks?

What were some of the obstacles they faced?

Comments: In this program there are three examples of a developmental task being worked on. First of all, Christina is working on motor coordination. Joe is learning to control his emotions, and the kitten is learning to control and use his claws. At the end of the program, despite some rocky times, all appear to be progressing toward mastery of their tasks.

Some clues that someone may be working on a developmental task are:

He or she keeps practicing the same thing over and over in different situations.

He or she invests a lot of concentration, time, and energy working toward a goal.

Christina, for example, used every opportunity to play with her ball, to reach for objects, and to draw. These were some ways she developed her fine and gross motor skills.

How did other characters respond to Christina's efforts to accomplish her task?

What do you think kept Joe and Maggie from recognizing the task that Christina was working on?

How did Joe and Maggie respond to Christina's efforts?

How do you think Joe and Maggie's reactions affected their relationship with Christina?

In general, how do you think children are affected when their parents respond only to the behaviors they see rather than look for what children are trying to accomplish through these behaviors?

When children misbehave, could they still be working on a developmental task? How should a parent react when a child misbehaves?

What danger is there when parents repress children's efforts to work on a developmental task?

How did Tio Daniel respond to Christina? Did he seem to understand the developmental task she was working on?

Comments: Maggie and Joe were puzzled by Christina's behavior, but they did not try to understand it. Instead, they simply thought of it as misbehavior or decided that Christina was spoiled. If Maggie and Joe had observed her behavior, they would have seen the almost compulsive nature of it. At every opportunity Christina was playing with her ball, reaching for objects, and even drawing with her crayons. Joe and Maggie would have been less anxious about what Christina was doing if they had taken the time to observe and think about her behavior.

Sometimes children unintentionally make mistakes as they work on developmental tasks. For example, a 12-year-old may create a mess the first time he cooks the family meal. Or the preschooler may jam a stapler in her effort to do things independently. When children make mistakes, they need parents' guidance more than ever. They need help, for instance, learning how to clean up as they cook or how to use a stapler properly.

Sometimes children's efforts at growing up involve misbehaviors. Misbehaviors, too, have causes. A toddler may have a tantrum because he's trying to assert his independence. A preschooler may hit another because she wants to test the child out. She has not yet learned more effective ways to get to know and play with others.

It's always helpful to look beyond actual behaviors to the intended outcome of the behavior. By doing so, parents can respond to children in ways that help them accomplish life's tasks.

How did other characters respond to Joe's efforts to work on his task?

Do you think other people were aware that Joe was working on a developmental task? Is it harder to recognize the tasks that adults are working on? Do you think Joe himself was aware of the task he was working on?

Did Joe have overly high expectations for himself as he worked on his developmental task?

What were some of the things that seemed to keep Joe from reaching his goal?

What are some of the obstacles that any adult working on developmental tasks faces at home or in the working world?

Comments: Ed and the sergeant seemed to be aware that Joe needs to learn to control his temper. It's not clear whether Joe was aware of his task until the end of the show. Parents may wish to speculate on this. This brings up another question: Are parents aware that they are working on developmental tasks? Perhaps they think in terms of certain concrete tasks such as learning to drive a car or balance a checkbook. It is doubtful, however, that children or adults are aware that these tasks are steps toward becoming independent.

What did Joe learn during the show?

What did Joe appear to learn from his experience with Billy Gumdrops?

What lesson did the scratching pole teach Joe?

What do you think Joe needed to do to support Christina's efforts?

Comments: From his own experience, Joe learned that:

A person needs experience in order to accomplish a task.
Sometimes a person with the best intentions makes mistakes.

The scratching pole taught Joe that sometimes a person needs to be shown better ways to work on a task.

Joe could be more helpful to Christina if he:

tried to understand her behavior and figure out the developmental task she is working on

helped her gain lots of practice throwing and catching by playing catch with her

helped her find a better place to practice throwing the ball (than in the house) and explained why it's more appropriate to play ball outside

helped Christina to take advantage of other opportunities that help develop coordination — wiping dishes, drawing, lifting grocery bags, playing jump rope, pushing someone on a swing.

What developmental tasks were the children in the documentary working on?

How could you tell that they were working on these tasks?

How might their efforts to grow up have been misunderstood?

Comments: Parents of the children in the documentary might not have seen that:

The children fighting in the classroom were really learning how to get along with each other, a task that involves experiencing the difficulties as well as the pleasures of human relationships.

- The child who was building up and knocking down a block tower was developing physical coordination.
- The bossy child was working on the task of developing identity. Testing limits on behavior helps children see themselves in relation to other people.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents give examples of children's behaviors they find hard to live with and difficult to understand.

- What are some things your children do that are hard to live with or difficult to interpret?
- What developmental tasks do you think your children might be working on through these behaviors?
- What things in your children or in the environment help or hinder them in accomplishing their current developmental tasks?
- How can you help your children to accomplish the tasks and still keep your sanity?

Comments: Encourage parents to think of their babies', toddlers', and preschoolers' behaviors. You might even list these behaviors on a chalkboard and put related developmental tasks beside them — as are shown in "On The Lookout" on page 161. When parents are ready to discuss ways to support their children's efforts, they may need to be reminded that:

- Sometimes parents may have to help the child to find a more appropriate or better way to work on the task.
- Sometimes parents may just have to live with a behavior. Many times, however, the behavior will be outgrown.

You might give parents a copy of "On The Lookout" as a summary of your discussion.

Ask parents how they would describe their and their children's patterns of growth as they work on developmental tasks.

- What have you noticed about your own pattern of growth over the years? Has it been even? Predictable?
- How would you describe your children's growth? Even? Sporadic?
- Does each child in your family seem to work on the same tasks at the same ages?
- Do you see children working on the same developmental task in different ways?
- Can you speed up a child's development?
- Why are the early years particularly important to a child's total development?

Comments: There is a saying by Howard Lane that "you can't grow frogs quicker by cutting off tadpoles' tails." Make sure that parents understand that they can't hurry or speed up their children's growth. Each child has his or her inner timetable of growth. And each stage of growth builds upon the one before.

Dr. James L. Hymes, Jr., outlines 6 major principles of human growth and development in *The Child Under Six*:

1. The child wants to grow.
2. Growth has direction.
3. Growth has order.
4. Each person is an individual.
5. Growth is indivisible — social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth are interrelated.
6. Growth is uneven.

Early childhood is particularly important because those years lay the foundation for all future growth. For more information on this topic refer to the unit on *The Need for Early Stimulation*.

Have parents share some of the developmental tasks they are trying to accomplish now.

What are some of the developmental tasks that other people your age seem to be focusing on?

What would you say are your development tasks right now?

Are there some general tasks you have been working on since childhood? Why is that? How have these developmental tasks changed over time?

Which tasks do you feel you have accomplished and left far behind? How can parents be supportive of each other's efforts to accomplish a task?

Comments: Encourage parents to share their own developmental tasks and their best efforts to accomplish them. Ask them to discuss the tasks that apply to new parents in particular.

Passages, by Gail Sheehy, describes some tasks that adults work on during different periods of their lives. Parents can comment on whether they agree or disagree with her definitions of tasks.

CHILDREN'S FEARS: FACE THEM

Hairy Scary

The world can be a scary place for young children.

Things that seem perfectly safe to us may look dangerous and harmful to small children. Their fears may seem ridiculous to us, but they are dreadfully real to children.

Try to see the world through a child's eyes and you can understand why some situations are frightening and why all children are afraid now and then.

THE BIG IDEAS

Fears are a normal part of growing up.

Some childhood fears are caused by actual objects or events; others are imaginary. Both kinds are real to the child.

Parents can help their children to cope with fears by accepting them as real and helping children find ways to face them.

A FEARSOME BEGINNING

During the first years, life brings one surprise after another. To a newborn baby, everything is new, and perhaps a bit uncertain.

Babies work hard at making sense of these new experiences. They learn to recognize certain places, special people, typical sounds, and regular happenings. When things happen in the usual way, they feel safe and secure.

When the pattern changes, however, they are undone. Unfamiliar people and new situations can be quite upsetting. Even familiar

people may confuse a baby if they change their appearances. Growing a beard or getting a new hairdo can make a parent seem like a scary stranger.

AWARE AND WARY

Toddlers are much more aware of the world around them, but they're still a bit wary about things that adults take for granted.

Toddlers are just beginning to sense their size and limitations. They realize that they can get hurt, and it's hard for them to judge whether or not they are safe. They see dog food being eaten by the dog. Will he eat them? They see the toilet swallow the toilet paper. Will they be swallowed too? Even the most ordinary experiences may hold a certain kind of terror.

IMAGINING THE WORST

Preschool children are apt to develop a new set of fears. By age 3 or so, children are more comfortable with "what is," but they worry about what "could happen." Their vivid imaginations make them afraid of many things that they once accepted calmly. It is difficult for them to separate what is real from what is imagined. They imagine dangers such as ghosts, robbers, monsters, and wild beasts. They anticipate disasters such as accidents, wars, or death. All of a sudden, a child may become afraid of the dark and troubled by nightmares. For the first time, a child may worry about something "happening" to his or her body.

Most children have fears some time during their early years. The way that parents support them in coping with these fears makes a big difference. It determines how much control fear has over children and how much control children have over their fears.

COMBATting FEARS

Children have different ways of overcoming their fears. Some children need to learn all about the situations they fear. It helps to take a special trip to the dentist's office, climb up in the chair, and touch a few of the tools that the dentist will put in their mouths.

Some children need to control the frightening objects or situations themselves. When they turn the vacuum cleaner on and off or flush the toilet themselves, their fear may go away. Still other children use their imaginations to combat fear. Pretending to hunt lions and lock them in a closet may make them feel safe enough to go to sleep.

And, of course, it always helps to share a fear with a parent. It feels good to talk about a scary event. Talking lets the fear out and brings a feeling of safety in.

A FRIEND IN FEAR

To a child, grown-ups have a magic all their own. They can forbid lions to sleep under the bed and send them back to the zoo. They can rescue their child from a nightmare and bring him or her back to earth, bed, and safety. The fact is, children believe in their parents. They are impressed by parents' courage and peace of mind in the face of such dangers.

Because children have such faith in their parents, parents can help them to express and overcome their fears, but parents also have the power to intensify their children's fears. The way that parents respond when children are afraid is very important: some ways are helpful; others don't help at all.

WHEN CHILDREN BECOME AFRAID...

Don't Laugh at Children's Fears

Statements such as "Don't be a sissy — boys aren't afraid of the dark" only shame children and make them doubt their own feelings.

Don't Force Them into a Situation They Fear

When children are afraid of washing down the drain, making them stay in the tub only intensifies their fear.

Don't Ignore Children's Fears

Telling children that the booster shot won't hurt makes them deal with fears all alone. They may repress and never work out the fear.

Don't Transmit Personal Fears to Children

When a parent is afraid of mice, children sense it. Often they adopt their parents' fears.

Do Accept Their Fears as Real

Acknowledging "Sometimes darkness can be scary — do you want a flashlight?" lets children know it's OK to have and to express fears.

Do Remove Them From the Fearful Situation, Then Talk About It

Parents can take children out of the tub, but show them that their toys won't wash down the drain.

Do Help Them Confront Fears

It helps children to talk about how the shot feels and pretend to give a shot to someone else. Expressing and acting out fears helps them to feel that they have some control.

Do Give Them Chances to Watch Other People Interact Confidently With Things They Fear

Watching another child handle a pet mouse often does more than words to help children lose their fear of mice.

There are fears within us all. Parents cannot prevent their children's fears, but they can help children face those fears. Children need an ally.

For Further Information...

The Child Under Six. James L. Hymes, Jr. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 2d ed., 1974. (paperback)

Children's Fears. Benjamin Wolman. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978.

Fears of Children. Helen Ross. Write to: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1540 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto, California 94304 (booklet)

The Magic Years. Selma Fraiberg. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. (paperback)

The Vulnerable Child. Caring for Children series, No. 5. Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20540 (booklet)

Your Child From One to Six. Richard H. G. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402 (paperback)

THE POINT OF VIEW

Here are some common fears that trouble children of different ages. In each case, try to imagine how the situation might look from the child's point of view.

Infants are apt to think...

...bathbats are not safe.

...sudden sounds will hurt them.

...their parents are "forever" when they can't see them.

...their own father is a monster when he has a frowning count on his face.

Toddlers are apt to think...

...part of themselves is being cut off and thrown away when they get a haircut. Or their bodies will leak out when they get a shot at the doctor's office.

...they will slip down the bathtub drain with the soap bubbles, or disappear down the toilet hole.

...the vacuum cleaner will eat them up.

...getting the spoo in their eyes will hurt them.

Preschoolers are apt to think...

...a watermelon will grow inside them because they swallowed the seed.

...every dog is going to bite them.

...there are monsters in the closet, under the bed, in the dark.

...they will kill their parents by wishing them dead in an angry moment.

This may be because...

...when lowered into the tub, they feel loss of support.

...they are not familiar with the buzzers or sirens that are making the sounds.

...they have not learned that people continue to exist when out of sight.

...they are apt to pay attention to only one aspect of an object or a person at a time.

This may be because...

...they are beginning to be aware that their bodies are vulnerable to injury.

...they have not developed a sense of what fits into an opening.

...they see it suck up dirt.

...they are right.

This may be because...

...children are often told that babies grow from seeds.

...they know their own teeth bite and they worry that other sharp teeth might bite them.

...their imaginations lead them to be afraid of many things they once accepted calmly.

...it's hard for them to separate wishes from fantasy.

The particular fears vary with the child and the events that trigger them. How long the fears last may vary as well. The way that you help your child to cope with them makes a big difference. It determines how afraid your child becomes and how well he or she can cope with fear.

THE PROGRAM

Hairy Scary

Characters:

Jeannie Sandburg — a young mother

Amos Sandburg — Jeannie's husband

Allison Sandburg — 5½ year-old daughter of Jeannie and Amos

Christopher Sandburg — Allison's 3-year-old brother

John Marston (Bumpo) — Jeannie's brother

Sarah Marston — Jeannie and Bumpo's mother

Exterminator

Wiley Mason and Genetta Forster — lawyers working with Amos in Iowa

Ruth — an employee at the newspaper archives

Drama:

One morning, a bearded exterminator comes to rid the Sandburg house of cockroaches. Allison refuses to let him in or let him come near her. She keeps a nervous eye on him while he works in the basement. Later, she panics when she sees a bearded cashier in the store.

Jeannie discusses these incidents over the phone with Amos. Neither parent can figure out the cause of Allison's fear. Not until Allison shies away from Bumpo, whom she used to adore, does Jeannie realize that Allison is afraid of beards. When Bumpo tries to come near Allison, Jeannie explains there is nothing to be afraid of. Jeannie tries telling Allison that she's making Bumpo unhappy. Jeannie even tries persuading Bumpo to stay for dinner because she thinks that this will force Allison to get used to his beard. Nothing works.

At work one day, Jeannie becomes terrified when she finds cockroaches in a file cabinet at the archives. Ruth makes fun of her, and she suddenly sees how Allison must feel when her fear of beards is not taken seriously.

Jeannie tells Allison about the cockroach incident and apologizes. During a quiet and relaxed moment, she asks Allison why bearded men frighten her. Allison says she can't see their faces and they hurt children during the night. Soon afterwards, Jeannie asks Bumpo to shave his beard. He mischievously shaves only half his face. Allison is shocked at first, but slowly overcomes her fear of Bumpo. Later, when Amos brings home a fake beard, Allison acts out her fear. It seems that at last she is beginning to get over her fear of beards in general.

Documentary:

Dr. James L. Hymes, Jr. explains that children are so new to the world that many ordinary events such as a haircut take them by surprise. Although children's fears sometimes don't make sense to adults, these fears are very real to children. Dr. Hymes suggests that parents comfort and protect their children when they're afraid, help children to express their fears, and encourage them to learn techniques to master the things that frighten them.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Ask parents to try to remember fears or nightmares they had as children. Ask them to share some of these with the group.

Do you remember what you were afraid of?

Were your fears based on something real or imaginary?

How did your parents react when you were afraid?

How long did your fears last? Why do you think they went away?

Do some of you still have remnants of your childhood fears? If so, why do you think you have them?

OR

Ask parents to describe what their children are afraid of.

Where do you think your children's fears came from?

Are children more fearful of real things than of imaginary things?

If you feel that your children are afraid of something imaginary, do you respond differently than when it's "real?"

In each of these activities, you might want to emphasize that most people — children and adults alike — have some kinds of fears. Some of these fears are based on real dangers. Others are based on imaginary ones.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind two questions while they view *Hairy Scary*:

How do you think Allison developed her fear?

How do Jeannie and Amos try to help Allison overcome her fear?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

How do you think Allison developed her fear?

How do children develop fears? Do fears always have causes?

Was it important for Jeannie and Amos to know the cause of Allison's fear?

Why did it take so long for Jeannie to learn the cause of Allison's fear?
How do you make your child feel comfortable and trusting enough to ask for help in coping with fear?

Was Allison's fear fairly typical of children you know?

Comments: No one really knows why Allison developed her fear of bearded men. Parents will have to speculate. Possible reasons include:

The exterminator may have been the first bearded man Allison noticed. She became afraid of him because he seemed so different. Allison may have met an unfriendly bearded man before, and assumed that all such men were unfriendly.

She may have looked at a frightening book or TV program about bearded men.

Allison's fear was related to her mother's fear of cockroaches. She associated the exterminator with feeling afraid and generalized her fear of this particular exterminator to all bearded men.

She may have heard that men rob houses or kidnap children and suddenly decided that the men who do this have beards.

Whether or not Jeannie and Amos understood the cause of Allison's fear, they needed to accept her fear as real and help her deal with it. It's not always possible for parents to find out the cause of their child's fear. Nevertheless, the fear can still be dealt with.

How did Jeannie and Amos try to help Allison overcome her fear?

What were Jeannie's feelings and reactions the first few times Allison became afraid? Was this typical of the way many parents might react?

Why weren't Jeannie's first attempts to help successful?

What made Jeannie change her approach?

How did Jeannie's conversation about the cockroaches affect Allison?

Was it realistic for Jeannie to ask Bumpo to shave his beard? What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a strategy?

What might have happened if Jeannie had ignored Allison's fear?

What did Amos have in mind when he brought the fake beard home?

Comments: Figuring out a way to help Allison overcome her fear involved a lot of problem solving for Jeannie and Amos:

At first Jeannie noticed, but dismissed, Allison's fear. It took time for her to discover that beards were frightening to Allison.

Jeannie tried to reason with Allison and convince her that she shouldn't be afraid. She tried to make Allison feel badly about re-

jecting Bumpo. Then she tried to force Allison to get used to Bumpo and his beard. These approaches did not work.

After her own bout with fear, Jeannie suddenly realized that she hadn't accepted Allison's fear because it seemed so irrational. Once Jeannie apologized and sympathized with Allison's feelings, Allison felt safer and trusted Jeannie to understand her fear. Encouraging Allison to express her fear was one of Jeannie's most successful strategies.

Jeannie's last strategy involved getting rid of the feared object — asking Bumpo to shave. This helped Allison to recognize Bumpo. Jeannie also stopped forcing Allison to go near Bumpo; Jeannie allowed Allison time to approach Bumpo on her own. This helped Allison to get over her fear of Bumpo.

Amos learned from Benetta that expressing and acting out a fear helps children overcome their fears. He brought home a false beard and other disguises to help Allison work out her fear at her own pace.

It's clear that there are a variety of ways parents can help children express and work through fears. Like Jeannie and Amos, most parents will need to work together to help their children face fears.

Keeping in mind the parents' strategies in the show and Dr. Hymes' advice in the documentary, how would you help the boy who was afraid of getting his hair cut?

Why do you think the boy getting his hair cut was afraid?

What could a parent do to help him overcome his fear of haircuts?

Comments: Parents might suggest:

helping the child learn about the hair clippers, bib, and other things at the barber shop before actually getting his hair cut.

taking the child along when the father gets a haircut.

encouraging the child to express his fears by talking about his fear or acting it out — i.e., pretending to give someone a haircut.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Ask parents to share their own children's fears.

What are your babies afraid of? Your preschoolers? Your toddlers?

What do you think causes their fears?

Do they have any ways of coping with these fears?

What have you done to help them? What was most effective? Least effective?

What were some of the difficulties you faced when you tried to help them?

What else could you have tried?

Comments: Since most children develop fears at one time or another, parents will probably have many examples to share. Once parents have described their own children's fears, encourage them to generalize from their experiences and see the kinds of fears that children of each age tend to share. You might give parents a copy of "The Roots of Fear" (p. 173) to add to or summarize the discussion.

Like Jeannie and Amos, most parents struggle to discover reasons for their children's fears and ways to help them feel more secure. This job may be particularly difficult for parents of pre-verbal children. You may want to emphasize the importance of reading children's body language as well as the value of encouraging them to express their fears. Refer to the unit *Listening to Children* for more information about the messages children give through their actions, expressions, and words.

Ask parents to talk about their children's nightmares.

What kinds of nightmares do your children have?

What seems to cause them?

At what ages did your children begin to get nightmares?

What do you do when your children have nightmares?

Comments: Authors Mussen, Conger, and Kagan in their book *Child Development and Personality* say that sometimes childhood fears are repressed during the day and emerge in nightmares. They report that: "Nightmares tend to reach a peak between ages 4 and 6." However, older children and adults may continue to have nightmares.

A parent can help a child who's having a nightmare by: holding and comforting the frightened child
encouraging the child to talk about the nightmare
trying to give the child pleasant secure experiences before going to bed rather than allowing him or her to watch an upsetting late-night thriller.

Encourage parents to share their own fears.

What kinds of fears have you had as an adult?

Do you know what caused these fears? When they began?

How have they affected you and your life?

How have you coped with your fears?

Does anyone else know about your fears — your children, spouse, or close friends? Is it OK for children to learn that adults have fears?

If you share your fears with your children, how can you avoid transmitting your fears to them? What do you do when you and your child are facing a situation that you are afraid of?

Comments: Many people are afraid of being afraid. They think it cowardly to feel or express fear. They worry that letting their children accept and express fear might make cowards of them, too.

Nothing could be further from the truth. A coward is a person who shrinks from facing the things he or she fears. Repressing rather than expressing fear is apt to intensify it and make a person less able to deal with it. By being honest about their fears, and showing children how to face the things that frighten them, parents teach their children courage and honesty as well.

Is fear useful? Can it be harmful?

What purpose does fear serve? Give examples.

When does fear become harmful?

What should people do if fear makes them unable to cope with the real world?

Comments: Fear is a healthy reaction to danger. It can prevent people from getting hurt. On the other hand, excessive fear can stop a person from living a normal life. This kind of fear is unhealthy and needs treatment.

Sometimes parents use fear as a method of discipline. For example, they say "Go to sleep or the boogeyman will get you", or "If you don't stay with me, I'll leave you in this store." This may be effective in getting children to do what parents want, but it can have bad side effects. Frightening children only adds to or intensifies their fears. There are many more effective methods of discipline, such as those outlined in the unit on *Discipline*.

Is there any relationship between children's fears, the kinds of TV programs they watch, and the stories they hear?

What kinds of children's fears are incorporated into stories and TV programs for young children?

Do you think TV increases or intensifies your children's fears? In what way? What do you feel you should do about this?

Do you think that children's stories such as fairy tales cause children's fears? How do they affect your child?

Comments: Many TV shows and children's stories have considerable influence on children's emotions because young children have difficulty separating fantasy from real-life situations. Furthermore, many TV and story plots are based on common childhood fears.

Parents and other people concerned about children's welfare have differing ideas about whether stories and TV increase children's fears:

Some think that scary stories and TV programs can help children express and work through their fears — unless they are so frightening that the child loses control. According to this point of view, "Hansel and Gretel" is a story which reassures children who are working out fears of losing their parents. The happy ending shows children that they can survive even without the protection of their parents.

Other people feel that many fairy tales and TV programs intensify and even cause children's fears. They argue that children should be protected from such experiences through careful screening of stories and programs.

Much seems to depend on the individual child. Some children are just more fearful than others. Different children become frightened by different kinds of stories.

One point of view on this issue is expressed in Bruno Bettelheim's book called *The Uses of Enchantment*.

SOCIETAL SUPPORT: WE'RE ALL IN IT TOGETHER

There Comes a Time

Raising children is a tough job. Although it can be the most rewarding job in the world, it can also be the most demanding.

From time to time all parents need help. They may need someone to take care of the children while they go back to work, or a clinic that provides special health care. They may want information on childbirth methods, or someone to talk to. Just as children need the support of families, so families need the support of society.

THE BIG IDEAS

No family need stand alone. Parents raise children best when they feel they are not alone at this big job.

Asking for help is not a sign of failure. On the contrary, it is a sign of effective parenting.

Although it is sometimes hard to find, there is a lot of help available to families.

Society could do much more, however, to help families to raise their children. Parents have a right to expect society to meet its responsibility to families.

THE LARGER FAMILY

Today, more than ever before, we are all dependent on each other. Society has become much more complex, and families themselves are changing. The old image of the "typical" American family — that is, one with two children, a father who works, and a mother who stays at home — now applies to only about one in six families in this country.

Today more parents are getting divorced. More and more families consist of only one parent. Even in families with two parents, it is becoming increasingly common for both parents to be away during the day. More than half of all married women with school-age children work. And families are often far away from relatives who can be counted on to help out in a crisis.

This modern family needs a wide variety of services, including:

- diagnosis and treatment of health problems
- financial aid
- child care
- parent education
- information and referral
- legal assistance
- recreation services.

Public and private agencies already provide many of these supports. Unfortunately, some of them are hard to find and some initiative may be needed to find out about and secure the help that is available.

Too often, however, even when services are available, parents don't use them. They think that asking for help is a sign of weakness, and that they should be able to solve their problems on their own. They don't want to be thought of as failures.

However, asking for help is not a sign of failure. On the contrary, asking for help is one of the most important skills of being a parent. It's a sign that parents care about their children and want to be effective.

SOCIETY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Of course, there's still a lot more that could be done to support families. Employers, for example, don't often recognize the special needs of parents. They need to take more seriously the demands of childrearing, and commit themselves more fully to the development of workers and their families.

Some employers are trying out ways to give parents more time to be with their children. The results so far have been very successful.

Federal, state, and local governments, too, could do much more to respond to the needs of families. National and local leaders are beginning to realize that any society that cares about preserving itself

must support its families. They are starting to see that social policy in areas such as employment, health care, and housing affects families. In fact, it's hard to think of any policy area that does not affect the lives of families.

A SIGN OF STRENGTH

Parents as well as children benefit from societal supports. By participating in the give and take of society, parents may feel less isolated and more a part of their community. Working with others can enable them to grow personally and learn what they have to offer to others. And it's always helpful to know that other people have similar problems. To take advantage of these resources, parents can make an effort to:

Find Out What Supports Are Available in Their Area And Take Advantage of Them

Within nearly every local community there are services of various kinds that provide supports for families. Local governments, churches, schools, and hospitals are usually helpful in locating services that can strengthen families and expand the opportunities available to parents and their children.

Urge Society to Meet Its Responsibility to Families

Societal support is every family's right, but parents may have to work to improve the ways in which society relates to and supports its members.

Support is there for the taking — or making.

For Further Information...

- Ourselves and Our Children.* Boston Women's Health Book Collective. New York: Random House, 1978. (paperback)
- All Our Children.* Kenneth Keniston. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. (paperback)
- Parents' Yellow Pages.* Frank Caplan, ed. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1978. (paperback)
- Who Cares for the Baby?* Beatrice Marden Glickman and Nesha Bass Springer. New York: Schocken Books, 1978.

PEOPLE ON YOUR LIST

There are individuals and agencies in nearly every community that provide support in health, education, and recreation. Knowing about these services can improve the quality of life for both you and your children. Take some time to fill out the directory below. Use the phone directory, library, or public agencies to help you find information. You can be surprised at how many people there are ready to help you and your family.

Subsiding Services

CONTACT: Churches, high schools, women's organizations, relatives, and friends

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Child Care

CONTACT: Your State Department of Social Services, Health Department, day care centers, nursery schools, Head Start centers

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Clinics

CONTACT: Your local health department or hospital. Ask about: Clinics for well babies, eye, speech, hearing, chest, mental health

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Counseling

CONTACT: Churches, holiness, family service agencies, clinics

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Parent Education

CONTACT: Your PTA, YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, YWHA, Parent Effectiveness Training group, adult education center, community college, or university

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Recreation

CONTACT: Local and county recreation departments, museums, sports clubs, community pools, YMCA, YWCA, YMHA, YWHA

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

Single Parent Groups

CONTACT: Parents Without Partners, Big Brother/Big Sister, singles clubs

Name: _____	Name: _____	Name: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____	Address: _____
Phone: _____	Phone: _____	Phone: _____

THE PROGRAM

There Comes A Time

Characters:

Sheila Hornbrenner — a young mother

April Hornbrenner — Sheila's 18-month old daughter

Maevae Caruso — April's teacher

Rita Vashon — a parent who teams up with Sheila

Mrs. Hoffman — Director of Crowther Day Care Center

Other parents and teachers

Drama:

The parents of children at Crowther Day Care Center learn that funds for the center have been cut, and that the center may have to close. Sheila attends a meeting to discuss what can be done. She serves as secretary for the meeting, and is recruited to help another parent, Rita, look for a space that could be donated to house the school.

Sheila's efforts to find a new place for the school are unsuccessful, as are her efforts to find another child care situation for April. All of the day care centers she calls are full, and the family day care home she visits appears inadequate for April's special needs. This experience convinces Sheila that the parents *have* to keep Crowther going.

At the next parent meeting, Sheila asks to withdraw from looking for a place for the school and work on another task at which she could be more useful. Rita suggests they work on the problem of space together, and Sheila finally agrees. When Rita and Sheila meet to map out their plans, Sheila explains that she feels like she's begging when she asks for help. Rita assures her that she has a right to ask for and expect help.

A little later Sheila and Rita attend the board meeting of a church that is considering the center's request for space. When some of the board members begin raising objections to the center, Sheila forgets her shyness and explains the need for the center. Sheila and Rita leave the meeting convinced that even if the church turns down their request, they'll find another place. They're going to make it.

Documentary:

The notion that parents who are in need of support can find it if they look for it is underscored by an ALCOR worker who was herself assisted by this program when she was a 15-year-old mother. The types of health, educational, and referral services provided by this community-based program in Kentucky are explained.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Ask parents in the group: Where would you go in our community if...

- you suspected your child had a speech problem?
- you wanted to go back to work after 15 years at home?
- your child were having difficulty recovering from your divorce?
- you wanted more information on how to help your child learn?
- you needed someone to take care of your child after school?
- you were a single parent who wanted to talk about your problems and concerns with other people?
- you needed financial help raising your children?
- you wanted moral support?
- you wanted to set up a day care center?

Use parents' answers to lead into a discussion of the availability of societal supports, and parents' awareness of them.

OR

Have parents discuss their notions about what societal supports for families are and who needs them. Help parents see that societal support includes a broad range of help, from the neighbor across the hall who listens to our troubles, to a discussion group such as this one, to a clinic that supplies specialized health care, to comprehensive federal programs.

TO INTRODUCE THE PROGRAM...

Ask parents to keep in mind the following questions as they view *There Comes A Time*:

- What kinds of societal support appear in this program?*
- How do Sheila's feelings about societal support change during the course of the program?*

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What kinds of societal support appeared in the program?

- Who needed societal support in this show?
- Is societal support needed only by day care parents?
- How easy was it for Sheila and the other parents to locate the support they needed?
- Were there other possibilities that they overlooked?
- Do you agree with the way they went about seeking support?

Can you recall any societal supports that appeared in other films in this series?

Comments: This program concentrated on the plight of day care parents, who often have trouble finding suitable care for their children. The impression should not be made, however, that day care parents are the only ones in need of support. All parents are.

Besides child care, we saw examples of two other major forms of societal support in this film:

the support and cooperation of other parents
the donation of food, facilities, and equipment by community groups.

We also see that Sheila and the other parents had to take a great deal of initiative and expend considerable time and energy to secure the help they needed. They seemed to think of most of the options available to them. Their need and determination makes it seem likely that, through one or the other of these sources, they will find the support they need.

What other supports were needed by people in the program?

What needs of Sheila and the other parents were left unmet?

Who could have provided the support they needed?

Did the community support the parents in the film as much as it could have?

How much responsibility does a workplace or community have to parents?

Comments: In this film parents may have been struck by:

the lack of quality child care to serve all the parents who needed it
the unwillingness of employers and other community groups to commit themselves to the needs of families.

Sheila's frustrating experience trying to find someone to donate space for the school indicated that many parts of the community were unaware of their responsibility to parents and children. The different organizations that Sheila approached appeared to view the donation of space as an act of charity, rather than as an act that would support and benefit the entire community.

How did Sheila's feelings about societal support change during the course of the program?

How did she feel about asking for help at the beginning of the program?

What changed her attitude toward societal support? What was her attitude by the end of the program?

How else did Sheila change?

What role did Rita play in Sheila's growth?

Comments: At the beginning of the program, Sheila appeared unaware of the societal supports that were available to her and other parents, and embarrassed about asking for help. Following the crisis at the center, though, her awareness began to grow. She discovered how important the center was to both her and April, and began to take an active role in helping the center survive. She experienced the support of other parents, and learned how they could all work together toward a common goal. Rita helped Sheila clarify her feelings and see that she had a right to expect the support of the society in which she lived. By the end of the program, Sheila was an active proponent of societal support and was willing to fight for her right to this support.

This experience benefitted Sheila in another important way, too. In the beginning, Sheila appeared shy about participating in the parent meetings, and unsure that she had anything to offer to the group. Gradually, though, she learned that she had skills that the group needed. By the end of the film, Sheila had grown considerably through her experience and appeared much more secure and self-confident.

Have parents discuss the point made in the documentary that all parents need societal support.

Do you agree with this statement?

What kinds of support were mentioned in the documentary? Are these supports that most parents need?

Comments: Although the focus of the documentary was on the ALCOR program, the narrator generalized the need for societal support to all people. ALCOR is one example of a support system that provides health, education, and referral services to the people in the community. Support is given in the form of information, actual materials, and counseling. By its location, most of the people served by ALCOR are rural and economically disadvantaged. The point that you will want to bring out is that although this is the particular clientele served by ALCOR, societal support should not be limited to any one group. The disadvantaged are in need of support — but so are the advantaged. All parents could benefit from services provided by a program such as ALCOR.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss the societal supports that are available in their own communities.

What individual and organizational resources exist to help you and other families in the task of raising children?

Which of these resources have you used? How did you locate them?
How do you go about finding help for a particular need?
What problems have you encountered in finding or securing help?
Which supports were most helpful? Were some less helpful than you had hoped?

Comments: As a starting point, you might hand out copies of "Who's on Your List?" (page 184) and have parents talk about the general resources and organizations listed on this sheet. Have them identify additional organizations that exist in your community and share with each other information about them — for example:

what services a particular organization offers
what cost — if any — is involved
whom to contact
qualifications for receipt of this service.

When parents are looking for help for a particular need, a few general rules of thumb can be useful:

Start off by asking people you know for information or advice, or consulting the yellow pages of the telephone book. Schools and churches are other good sources of information.

Join forces with other friends or colleagues with related needs.

Be persistent in going after the information or help you want.

Ask for referrals to other possible sources of help.

Ask parents to discuss some of the reasons why not all families take advantage of the supports available to them.

Do some families think they don't need help?

Do some people not like to ask for help? Why?

Are some people unaware that such supports exist?

Comments: One reason why many people are reluctant to ask for help is their belief that the family should be able to stand on its own. Kenneth Keniston refers to this belief as "the American myth of personal self-sufficiency." He believes that this myth is one of the most dangerous influences on the family, for it says that those parents who ask for help are inadequate. It also implies that families are isolated building blocks of society when, in fact, the family is intertwined and dependent on all the other parts of society.

Other people may be reluctant to take advantage of existing supports — particularly those provided through governmental programs — because they are intimidated by, or have had negative experiences with, them.

Have parents discuss some needs of families that are not being met by existing societal support.

What are some of your needs for which there are no supports?

Are you aware of what some other countries are doing to help parents in the task of childrearing?

Do you think that employers could do more to help parents?

What more could the Federal government do?

Do you think such changes are possible?

How can parents go about getting improvements made?

Comments: Two major areas in which many parents need support are employment and child care.

Parents who work face a major conflict. On the one hand, they have to earn money and want to advance their careers. On the other hand, they want to spend time with their children — especially when the children are young. In our country, today, it is difficult to do both. Employers could support parents through options such as:

Flexible Work Hours, so that mothers and fathers can be with their children at important times

more *Part-Time Work* without loss of seniority, pension investments, etc.

Time Off for pregnancy and family emergencies

Sick Leave that includes time off to care for children when they are ill

Maternity and Paternity Leave.

Other countries have already carried out successful experiments in these areas. Sweden, for example, has a national policy on sick leave that authorizes leave for working parents whenever a child is ill. Sweden has even been trying out a system of paid paternity leave where fathers are allowed seven months' leave after the birth of a child while still receiving 95 percent of their pay.

Another area in which many families have a great need is day care. The demand for child care in this country has skyrocketed. Today almost all single parents, and over half of married parents, must make child care arrangements, but there are spaces in licensed day care centers for only one out of seven children who need them. Clearly, providing quality day care at an affordable price should be a national priority.

Some parents may also point out that the quality of family life, and consequently the development of children, are affected by many national policy areas — such as housing, energy, transportation, environment, and especially employment.

There are many ways in which parents can make their needs known and help bring about change, including: writing to their Congressional Representative or to the editorial column of their local

newspaper; urging organizations to take a stand and build such programs into their national agenda; and forming special interest groups to lobby for legislation.

How can families support each other within their own communities?

How can parents share their time and skills with others?

What are some of the untapped resources within families?

Comments: There are various ways in which families can be supportive to each other. For example, parents can set up: cooperative nursery schools; babysitting pools; discussion groups; play groups; community centers; and volunteer organizations such as Meals on Wheels. Older children and retired family members are often untapped resources, too, in terms of providing child care and other services.

COMPETENCE: IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND

Stacking the Deck

All parents want their children to become capable and competent. The degree to which children achieve this depends on many factors. One of the most important is how much confidence children have in themselves.

Self-confidence is not something that is inherited. It is learned, and parents have a lot to do with whether children develop confidence or doubt in themselves and their ability to do things. To a large extent, children become what they think they are.

THE BIG IDEAS

How competent children become is largely determined by how competent they believe they are.

Self-confidence — or self-doubt — is taught to children by parents and other important people in children's lives.

When children's mistakes and weaknesses are constantly pointed out and their strengths go unnoticed, children learn that they are not competent.

When children's strengths are emphasized and they are given chances to be successful, they learn they are capable.

THE CONFIDENCE GAME

"He's lost his confidence."

Sportscasters and coaches often say that about athletes in a slump. To do well, athletes need to believe in themselves. However, this is not true just for athletes. All of us behave differently when we feel confident than when we don't:

*THOSE WHO THINK THEY CAN, DO.
THOSE WHO THINK THEY CAN'T, DON'T.*

Self-confidence — or the lack of it — is very important in determining how competent children become. When children lack confidence in themselves, they expect to fail. They're afraid to try new things. Then, by avoiding new challenges, they never have a chance to learn that they *can* do things. Their confidence and competence never get a chance to develop.

Self-doubt results in failure.

When children have faith in themselves, however, they eagerly reach out for new experiences. Through these new experiences, they gain new skills and become even more confident and capable.

Self-confidence leads to success.

TO COMPETENCE THROUGH CONFIDENCE

Young children want to be seen as capable and strong, but they lack the skills and knowledge that grown-ups have. In the beginning, they really are incompetent at many things adults place much emphasis on. For example, one child development expert has noted that we can never really forgive young children for being illiterate! Babies are unable to dress or feed themselves, open doors, climb stairs — you name it.

It's clear, then, why children really need the help of their parents in developing a feeling of competence. Some ways in which parents can help children build confidence in themselves are:

Focus on Children's Strengths

To some parents, "common sense" says: "If I want my children to be competent, I must be sure to point out and correct all their mistakes." However, constant criticism just makes children lose confidence in themselves. Children become fearful — and incompetent. When, however, parents applaud each step toward mastery, children are encouraged. They keep on trying, and usually succeed.

Express Faith in Children's Abilities

Children tend to live up to the expectations of parents and other adults. They usually act the way people expect them to act. If for some

reason a parent wanted a child to become incompetent, the parent need only show a lack of confidence in that child. If parents want children to become competent, they can show their faith in children by giving them responsibility and letting them do as much as possible for themselves.

Provide Experiences for Success

"Nothing succeeds like success," goes the old saying, and how true it is. Children, especially, need to experience success. Parents can take advantage of everyday opportunities to help children see what they can do. They can unobtrusively help a child learn to set the table by laying one spoon in place. The child could then finish the job by putting a spoon at each place. Parents can give such cues and clues to guide children in many other tasks.

Parents can also help children succeed when they run into difficulty. If a child is struggling unsuccessfully to put on her tee shirt, a parent could help by slipping the shirt over her head and arms. Then the child can experience the success of completing the operation by pulling it down over her tummy.

Of course, no parent can, or would want to, keep children from every possibility of failure. Children also learn from failing. But parents who want their children to grow in self-confidence will want to be sure that children are frequently successful. Competence requires challenge and practice. Activities such as those on the next page can help children discover their talents and interests and learn:

I Can Do It.

For Further Information...

How Children Fail. John Holt. New York: Delta, 1964. (paperback)

How Children Learn. John Holt. New York: Dell, 1969. (paperback)

I Saw a Purple Cow and 100 Other Recipes for Learning. Ann Cole, Carolyn Haas, Faith Bushnell, and Betty Weinberger. Boston: Little, Brown, 1972. (paperback)

The Mother's Almanac. Marguerite Kelly and Elia Parsons. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1975. (paperback)

Peoplemaking. Virginia Satir. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1972. (paperback)

Your Child's Self-Esteem. Dorothy Corkille Briggs. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1970. (paperback)

CONFIDENTIALLY YOURS

Self-confidence has a ripple effect. When children feel capable in one area, the feeling is likely to spread to other areas of their lives. There are many areas in which young children can become competent. Here are just a few.

Arts and Crafts

Even young children can master the basics of popular arts and crafts like: sewing, woodworking, weaving, sculpturing in clay, soap, or papier-mâché; potato printing, paper cutting and folding, jewelry making, painting, and making musical instruments. Save materials you usually throw out, and look at resource books like those below to see how your children can put these materials to creative use.

Camping

You can camp right in your own backyard, or at a nearby park or beach. Children can be assigned simple tasks like: unpacking, collecting wood, helping put up the tent, and cooking. There'll be opportunities to practice and pick up lots of new skills: zipping and unzipping, making knots, fishing, reading a compass, and crabbing. The satisfaction of working together toward a common goal is one they won't forget soon.

Contributing To The Household

Children feel good about themselves when they have something to offer to the running of the household. From an early age, they can take on responsibility for simple tasks like picking up the newspaper, putting away groceries, folding laundry, emptying baskets, raking leaves, and sweeping the floor. Older children feel especially proud when they can help you with younger siblings by holding the baby's bottle, making simple toys for the baby, or telling a story to a younger brother or sister.

Gardening

To children there are few things more fun than digging in the dirt. Planting seeds and watching them grow and produce is a source of wonder and joy to children. They don't need a lot of space. A window box or a few flower pots will hold some beans, tomatoes, herbs, flowers and radishes.

Body Movement and Expression

Self-confidence grows with physical strength and coordination. Give your children lots of space, materials and opportunities for free physical movement. In addition, there are many special experiences you may want to introduce them to: dancing, acting, playing an instrument, singing, and swimming, for example.

Collecting

Children love to collect things: rocks, coins, stamps, buttons, bottles, bugs, shells, and butterflies, for instance. With a little help from you, your children can learn a lot about one area, and end up with a collection that they can be proud of. Collecting offers a great opportunity for hikes and field trips, too.

Cooking

Food is important to children, and knowing how to prepare it gives them a sense of pride and accomplishment. You may be surprised at how many things children can do in the kitchen. If you help them observe basic safety rules, they can: cut, grind, grate, beat, stir, mash, peel, wash, squeeze, strain, measure, and pour. They can help you shop and plan menus, and follow simple recipes. In the process, they develop their small muscles, and learn a lot about foods, words, numbers, time, safety, and following directions.

Observing Holidays

Children needn't be passive observers of holidays. They can become part of family traditions by helping you plan and prepare for celebrations. They can: help you select the Thanksgiving turkey and Christmas tree, make Halloween costumes and Valentine's Day cards, dye Easter eggs, and make Matzo for Passover. Many holidays — like Martin Luther King's birthday or St. Patrick's day — are a good time to talk about history, folklore, and the meaning behind holiday observations.

THE PROGRAM

Stacking the Deck

Characters:

Sandy Marshall — a young mother

Marc — Sandy's 5-year-old son

Portia — Marc's 3-year-old sister

Grandpa — Sandy's father-in-law

Sonny — Sandy's brother-in-law

Ms. Santana — Marc's teacher

Drama:

When Sandy arrives to pick up Marc after school one day, his teacher mentions that Marc is having a little difficulty with numbers. She suggests playing a few simple card games at home that will be fun for Marc and help him feel confident about matching and combining numbers.

Sandy takes this advice, and both she and Marc seem to enjoy these games. Then Grandpa finds out that Marc has trouble keeping high and low numbers straight. He promises to "have that boy straightened out so fast you won't know he had any trouble at all."

Grandpa begins tutoring Marc in math each night. During these lessons, Grandpa is quick to point out and express disappointment at Marc's mistakes. He has Marc do things over and over until they are right. After a few nights like this, Marc has become tense and unhappy and lost confidence in himself. A few days later, he gets into a fight in school when another boy calls him a dummy. His teacher explains to Sandy that Marc has become angry and unenthusiastic. He is like a different child, she says.

That night Sandy tells Grandpa that she doesn't want him to work with Marc anymore. Grandpa goes to help Sonny work on the stereo, and expresses his hurt feelings. When Grandpa has trouble soldering one of the stereo connections, Sonny echoes some of the things Grandpa has been saying to Marc. Grandpa becomes angry, then realizes what Sonny is trying to teach him. He goes up to Marc's bedroom, where Marc is playing cards with renewed confidence and enthusiasm, and adds his encouragement to Sandy's.

Documentary:

Children are viewed in a Connecticut school and at their homes doing activities aimed at developing their self-confidence. Parents and

teachers discuss why they think it is important to develop a feeling of competence in children and give examples of how they help their children feel self-confident.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Tell members of your group the following true story:

A high school senior — let's call him Bob — took a college aptitude test (ACT) and received a score of 96. He thought this meant he had an IQ of 96. That fall Bob entered college. In the first semester he received failing or barely passing grades in all his courses. He started to think about dropping out of school, and went to talk to a counselor at the college. The counselor happened to mention that a score of 96 on the ACT meant that he had scored higher than 96% of all the other students who took the test. Bob's IQ was not 96 as he had believed, but somewhere between 130 and 140. Bob decided to stay in school, and in the second semester got A's in nearly all his courses.

Ask parents what they think was the reason for the change in Bob's competence at college work. Do they think he took easier courses in the second semester? Learned how to write papers and take exams? Or did he just learn that he was capable of doing college work?

This story illustrates how our perceptions of ourselves may determine our behavior, even when they have no basis in reality. We behave in terms of what we *learn* about ourselves, not in terms of what we actually are.

OR

Tell parents that a certain father is trying to help his son Jimmy learn to dress himself. One day Jimmy tries to put his shirt, jeans, and socks on by himself. He gets the shirt and jeans on fine, but he puts his socks on inside out. Ask parents which of the following responses the father should make to increase the likelihood that Jimmy will get his socks on right next time:

Oh, Jimmy, you put your socks on wrong again. Why can't you remember that the fuzzy part goes on the inside?

or

Good! You got your shirt and jeans on right. Why don't you just change your socks so the fuzzy part is inside.

The second response, of course, is the best one, because it emphasizes what Jimmy did right and is more likely to make him feel confident. Use this example to lead into a discussion of the relationship between confidence and competence.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to look for answers to the following questions as they watch *Stacking the Deck*:

What is the difference in the way Sandy and Grandpa try to help Marc?

How did each of these methods make Marc feel?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What was the difference between the way Sandy and Grandpa went about helping Marc?

Were Sandy and Grandpa working toward the same goal?

What did they each believe was the best way to reach that goal?

Do you think that playing with cards was a good way to teach numbers? Were Grandpa's drills? What are some other ways Sandy and Grandpa could have helped Marc work on his math skills?

Do you think Sandy had more faith in Marc than Grandpa?

Was Grandpa more concerned about Marc's difficulty in math than Sandy?

Why do you suppose Grandpa felt he had to push Marc so much?

What would you have done if Marc were your son?

Comments: Sandy and Grandpa both wanted to help Marc master his numbers. They went about working toward this goal, though, in completely different ways.

Grandpa operated under the common assumption that children learn best when their mistakes are pointed out and criticized. He never mentioned what Marc did correctly. He thought that by pushing Marc to concentrate on doing things right, he would be able to teach Marc his numbers. What Grandpa didn't realize was that he was also teaching Marc something about himself — that he was not competent.

Sandy, on the other hand, used the more educationally sound method of looking for Marc's strengths and building on those. She praised him for his successes, and when he made mistakes, she indicated her faith that he would correct himself. In addition to helping Marc learn his numbers, Sandy was teaching him that he was capable of learning, and that learning could be fun.

What were the effects of each of these methods on Marc?

How did Marc change during the course of the film?

Do you think that such a change could take place so quickly in real life?

Why did Marc react so negatively to Grandpa's methods?

How did each method affect Marc's performance? His confidence in himself? His ability to get along with others?

What do you think might happen if a child were subjected to Grandpa's methods over a period of many years?

Comments: At the beginning of the film, Marc was a happy youngster who participated enthusiastically in activities at home and at school. When Sandy introduced the idea of the card games, Marc joined in eagerly. When he made mistakes, he didn't seem to get very upset. Sandy's evident faith in Marc made him believe that he could learn — despite a few mistakes along the way. With Sandy's help, Marc did appear to be learning.

When Grandpa took over, however, Marc's performance deteriorated rapidly. As a result of the steady barrage of criticism Marc received, he began to feel, and act, incompetent. When this happened, he was unable to do well even those number skills that he had already mastered. He became so unsure of himself that he could not even enjoy games that he once enjoyed in school, and he could not take the teasing of his classmates.

Some parents may express doubt that Grandpa's criticism could have affected Marc to such a degree and in such a short time. However, as John Holt pointed out in *How Children Learn*, children "are perceptive and sensitive, and very easily hurt, humiliated and discouraged." In Marc's case, too, the power of Grandpa's criticism may have been due to the fact that his love and respect meant a lot to Marc.

What was it that Sonny was able to teach Grandpa Marshall?

What do you think motivated Sonny to teach his father a lesson?

Do you think he could have gotten the same message across to his father by reasoning?

Do you think that Grandpa will permanently change his ideas about correcting mistakes? Or do you think the change will just be temporary?

Comments: Grandpa learned from Sonny what it feels like when someone notices only your mistakes and never your successes. Sonny gave Grandpa a "taste of his own medicine" through comments such as:

"Look at it, Pop. It's wrong. And that's wrong!"

"It's not the right ones we have to work on, Pop. If you would work harder, maybe you could get them *all* right."

"A break? You know you can never accomplish anything by relaxing."

It is likely that Sonny felt compelled to intervene and make his point because he identified so strongly with Marc. Sonny saw the same thing happening to Marc that had happened to him, and he decided to act before the situation went too far.

It is doubtful that Sonny could have made his point so well through a "heart-to-heart" talk with his father. For one thing, "feeling" a message is a much more effective way of understanding a point than just hearing it. In Sonny's case, his father does not always respect Sonny's opinions and may not have listened to his advice.

Have parents discuss what the parents and teachers in the documentary did to promote a feeling of competence in the children.

Would the children have developed a sense of competence performing the same activities if the adults had not acted as they did? What did you think about the school in the film?

Comments: The school shown in the documentary tried to encourage confidence and competence through an "I can do it" atmosphere. The teachers were trained to look for what children did well, rather than jump on their mistakes, and we saw teachers providing this kind of support to children as they laced their shoes, shook hands, and painted.

The parents in the documentary attempted to build a sense of competence by involving children in activities such as cooking, folding clothes, and planting a tree.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents talk about how a feeling of confidence — or the lack of it — affects their own behavior.

How do you feel when someone criticizes you a lot?
How do you feel when you are praised?
How is your performance affected by each of these feelings?
How did your parents, teachers and other adults make you feel about your abilities?

Comments: Ralph Waldo Emerson once said that "self-trust is the first secret of success." Encourage parents to remember specific incidents when their self-trust wavered because people saw only their weaknesses or didn't expect very much of them. How do they think they would be affected if criticism and low expectations became the usual reaction to them?

What are some common ways parents and other adults tend to make children doubt their abilities?

Do you think you have ever made your children feel stupid or incompetent?
Have teachers ever done or said things that caused your children to lose confidence in their abilities?

Are there ways to correct mistakes that don't result in loss of confidence?

Comments: Every parent has done and said things at times that have caused a child to doubt his or her abilities. The desire to have children turn out "just right" often causes parents to point out and correct every mistake -- big or little. Instead of the criticism having the intended effect, the children end up with little self-confidence and lots of self-doubt.

Learning is largely a journey into the unknown. It involves trial and error, risk and uncertainty. If children's efforts to learn are criticized and belittled by parents, children will become unwilling to expose themselves to new experiences. This is what John Holt refers to as "fear of failure."

How can parents help their children feel confident and competent?

What strategies have you used to help your children experience success?

How can you correct children's mistakes and help them learn without making them feel incompetent?

How do you communicate your faith in your children's competence?

Are there times when praise is not helpful in building confidence?

Can children become too confident of themselves?

Comments: Praising children's accomplishments helps build a sense of competence, but only when it is genuine. Children can tell when praise is false. Praise is most effective when it is specific and helps the child see what he or she has accomplished. For example, "You threw that ball much further than you did the other day. You're getting very strong" is more helpful than just "Good girl."

The power of expectations in influencing the behaviors of children, adults, and animals has been well-documented. One of the most well-known experiments on this phenomenon is the "Pygmalion" experiment conducted in the 1960's. (See: *Pygmalion in the Classroom*. Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.)

In this experiment, a group of grade school children were given an IQ test. Their teachers were told that the purpose of the test was to find out which children would do especially well in school. Instead of scoring the tests, the experimenters selected at random the names of several children in each class. They told the teachers that these children would be their best students. The experimenters wanted to see how this "false" information would affect the success of these children in school. At the end of the year, when all the children were tested again, those children whom the teachers had been told would do well were the ones who improved the most.

This experiment is an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy. It illustrates how when we expect people to behave in certain ways, very often this prophecy — or prediction — comes true.

You might share this story with parents and ask them to speculate as to how the teachers communicated their expectations to the students.

Another important way in which parents help build competence in children is by providing them with opportunities to use and develop these skills. You might hand out copies of "Confident-ially Yours" (page 195) and have parents talk about these and other activities in which children can participate.

You could also discuss some special things parents can do to increase the likelihood that children's efforts to become competent will lead to success rather than failure. For example, parents can:

- dress children in simple, sturdy clothes
- provide nonbreakable dishes and glasses
- provide some low hooks and stepstools for reaching
- break tasks down into their competent parts when teaching new things.

CREATIVITY: A FRESH LOOK ON THE WORLD

Christinitas

Some people think that the only creative people are artists, musicians, poets, and writers, but that's a myth. We all have the potential to:

look beyond ready-made solutions
experiment and gain insight
express ideas in new and unusual ways.

Whether we work with words, wood, hair, movement, or steel and concrete, we can all be creative.

THE BIG IDEAS

Creativity is the ability to think and act in imaginative and unique ways.

Parents foster creativity when they encourage and praise children for exploring, experimenting and making decisions on their own.

Parents stifle creativity when they expect children to think and act in only one "right" or "correct" way.

THE CREATIVE URGE...

To a child, the world is altogether fresh and new. Faces, hands, and bottles miraculously appear above the baby's crib, then go away. What are these things? The baby is curious, eager to touch and try them out.

...To Experiment

Babies become increasingly creative as they explore the world. From the start, babies use all of their senses to try things out. Sometimes, however, they can't connect the things they see with what they hear. Gradually, they learn to put these experiences together in their minds. As time goes by, they become more capable physically of getting into things. They begin to experiment. They try making different sounds. They try out every new action they've learned on a new object.

...To Solve Problems

Young children find many problems to solve. We forget that such a simple thing as getting a doll that's out of reach is a tough problem for a baby. Toddlers work on problems such as how to walk and carry toys at the same time. Preschoolers tackle harder tasks, such as how to put clothes on a doll, paint stripes, or get into Mommy's tool box.

Often children solve problems in unusual ways, since they have few preconceived ideas about how things are supposed to be done. For example, a three-year-old may flip her coat over her head, rather than put it on the more conventional way.

Gradually, children learn to pause and plan ahead before plunging into action. They start to consider alternatives. They choose between tape and glue rather than trying the first thing they see. Planning makes it easier for them to do what they envision. It also helps them think of more creative ideas.

...To Invent

Sometime around the third birthday, children develop a bursting desire to recreate everything they've experienced. They make replicas of things they're familiar with and pretend to be people they know. They try to recreate their fantasies, fears and new ideas. And they'll use any means — words, paint, blocks or clay — to express things that are important to them.

In the process of recreating their experiences and ideas, children create something new, unique and special. A child may set triangular wedges on a board and explain: "They're trees and they're growing up to the sky. And they're looking at the moon." It's through such inventions that we learn how children think. It's through such creations that we discover each child's fresh and unique vision of the world.

LOSING THE SPARE

At some point, many children stop exploring and experimenting. They tear up their pictures. They don't dare paint a tree purple or sing their own songs. They lose faith in themselves and their power to think for

themselves. Somehow, they learn that there is only one "right" answer, one way to do things.

Intent on teaching the fastest and easiest way to do things, many parents don't allow their children to explore and experiment. They punish a child for getting into things or making a mess. They barely glance at the pictures or crooked vase children bring home, and don't realize it when their children have solved problems in new ways. In doing this, parents discourage creativity, even though they may really value this ability.

KEEPING THE SPIRIT

Creativity, it seems, does not have to be learned; it only has to be allowed to grow. Parents can support their children's creative spirit in the following ways:

Help Children To Be Observant and Curious

Parents can encourage children to explore and talk about what they see, smell, taste, hear and feel.

Encourage Children To Explore and Experiment

Parents can help children try out different ways to play with the same materials.

Give Children Opportunities To Solve Problems and Plan Ahead

Parents can make use of opportunities for problem solving and planning that occur in everyday situations.

Encourage Children To Recreate Their Experiences and Ideas

Parents can supply a variety of materials, such as dress-up clothes and paint, and encourage their children to express what they know and imagine about the world.

Who knows? Helping children think in imaginative and unique ways may awaken parents to their own creativity...

For Further Information...

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Guiding Your Child to a More Creative Life. Fredelle Maynard. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973. (paperback)

Imagination — Key to Human Potential. Polly McVickar. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1972. (paperback)

In the Early World: Discovering Art Through Crafts. Elwyn S. Richardson. New York: Random House, 1964. (paperback)

The Mother's Almanac. Marguerite Kelly and Elia Parsons. New York: Doubleday & Company, 1975. (paperback)

THE CREATIVE CLIMATE

You can help your children become creative by encouraging them to be curious, experiment, solve problems, and recreate what they know about the world. Some more specific things you can do with your children at different ages are listed below.

INFANTS

Things To Do

Carry babies around the house and out of doors so they can look at and touch different things.

Give them a few objects to look at, touch, taste, listen to and smell. They like to look at faces.

Put a favorite toy slightly out of reach so older babies can figure out how to get it.

When older babies are not looking, hide a toy under a see-through scarf or mesh berry container.

Things To Provide

Brightly colored balls and pictures on the wall

Noise-making toys: squeeze toys, see-through baby bottles with colored buttons inside, metal measuring spoons tied together

Things that move: people, mobiles, balls

TODDLERS

Things To Do

Encourage toddlers to explore the same material in many different ways — shake, bang, hit, squeeze.

Encourage them to solve simple problems such as how to fit things inside of other things or put on a shoe.

Play hide and seek games with their toys.

Help them begin to recreate things by imitating simple sounds, words and actions.

Introduce them to materials (such as paint) that they can explore and use for making things.

Things To Provide

Containers of different sizes — margarine tube, egg cartons, cans, shampoo bottles and tops, old pocket books, cardboard boxes — and small objects to put in them

A variety of expressive materials: paint, play dough, sand and water, blocks, simple dress-up clothes such as hats and purses

PRESCHOOLERS

Things To Do

Join preschoolers in pretending to be other people and things, such as helicopters, animals and trees.

Encourage them to use the same toy or material in many different ways.

Encourage them to recreate their experiences: make up a song about making cookies; draw a picture of a trip to the ice cream parlor.

Give them opportunities to plan: what they'll do after supper or before going to bed; how to make a building out of blocks.

Read them stories and poems which use words in creative ways.

Things To Provide

Old materials to explore in new ways: blocks of different kinds to be used together

Paint on paper, cardboard, burlap or wood

Water and sand, rocks, mud or water on concrete
Wax mixed with soap bubbles or food coloring
Paper to fold, roll up, tear or cut in different ways

Materials for problem solving:

Water, funnels, sections of old hose or tubes

Jars and tops of various sizes
Hole punch, paper, and yarn or shoelaces for weaving
Pipe cleaners

A variety of expressive materials:

Wood, bottle caps, fabric scraps, string, elastic bands, nails, and a lightweight hammer

Dress-up clothes: shirts, dresses, cut-off pants, neckties, hats, shoes and wallets

Homemade instruments: drums made from pots, pans or cardboard containers; shakers made from plastic bottles and dried peas or beans; pop bottles with water; sturdy elastic tied taut between 2 nails on a board

Paper and magic markers for drawing and story telling

THE PROGRAM

Christinitas

Characters:

Joe Sanchez — a young father

Maggie Sanchez — Joe's wife

Christina Sanchez — Joe and Maggie's 4-year-old daughter

Tio Daniel — Maggie's retired uncle

Ed Plunkett — Joe's partner

Drama:

The Sanchez family is shopping for a present for Maggie's godchild. Prices for baby furniture are so high that Joe suggests that Maggie and Tio Daniel make the present.

That evening, as Tio Daniel remakes an old table in his workshop, Christina puts two chairs together and calls it a baby bed. Tio Daniel suddenly thinks of using Christina's idea to make a crib for the godchild. He builds the crib and Maggie sews the mattress and skirt for it. They name the crib a "Christinita" — after Christina. Maggie thinks of selling Christinitas for profit.

Although Joe is enthusiastic about the Christinita as a present, he thinks that selling cribs is a crazy idea. He reminds Maggie that they need money to buy a house and are already in debt.

Maggie, however, goes ahead with her creative venture. She and Tio arrange to sell the Christinitas at a store for \$35 each. Their search for more chairs brings them to an auction. Without consulting Joe, Maggie buys 80 chairs and writes a check for the entire amount. Then she and Tio busily make cribs.

Maggie begins to doubt her idea when bills arrive and no cribs sell. When Joe discovers that Maggie has spent \$160 on chairs, he is furious. He wants to get rid of the chairs. Maggie feels terrible, and Christina says she doesn't want to invent things anymore.

The tide turns, however, when Maggie learns that six Christinitas have been sold and there are orders for more. Their creative idea has worked out after all.

Documentary:

In the first part of the documentary, children are seen using a variety of creative approaches to getting a football out of a creek. They try a hockey stick, a branch, and fishing net before putting stepping stones in the creek so it's possible to reach the ball.

Later on, we watch children solving problems and creating things with wood and nails, blocks, musical instruments and clay. One mother encourages her children to invent a thunderstorm song.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

Divide the parents into small groups. Give each group a children's toy. Ask them to see how many different things they can do with that toy.

Any toy — such as a puzzle, set of blocks, ball or doll — will do for this activity. The purpose of this activity is to help parents see that children's toys can be used in more than one way. In fact, they can be used in all kinds of imaginative ways. Parents who are aware of this can encourage their children to be more inventive and creative in using the things they already have.

OR

Ask parents to share their creative moments. Talk about some of these issues:

Do you consider yourselves creators and inventors?

Do you tend to think of creative people as belonging to particular fields?

Does a person have to be talented or brilliant to be creative?

What are the qualities a creative person has?

Why do you value creativity? What part have creative people played in making society what it is today?

OR

Before the meeting begins, set up a display of children's creations — artwork, woodwork, stories, or photographs of make-believe play. Give parents a chance to look at the display before the meeting, then discuss what these works show about children's creativity. Refer to display examples throughout the discussion. The display should show that:

Children express their views of the world in very different ways. Drawings by several children of the same theme or object will demonstrate this idea.

Creativity involves experimenting with a material (such as paint) in different ways as well as making a symbolic work (a painting of a house, for example).

Creativity is expressed in many ways — through dramatic play and problem solving as well as arts and crafts.

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind two questions while they view *Christinitas*:

Which members of the Sanchez household are most creative?

Which opportunities in the Sanchez home tend to support Christina's creativity and which forces stifle it?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

Which members of the Sanchez household are most creative?

Discuss each member of the Sanchez household (Christina, Maggie, Joe, and Tio Daniel).

How do you think the sale of the Christinitas affected each person's creativity? What if the Christinitas had not sold?

Comments: Like most young children, *Christina* has no preconceived ideas about how things work or how things are made. She was able to invent a crib by putting two chairs together and pretend that a mirror was a lollipop. Christina is creative, but is also beginning to learn and worry about the risks that creativity can involve. She is also so affected by the moods and actions of adults around her that she refused to invent things from a tissue after Joe ordered Maggie to get rid of the chairs.

Once Tio Daniel helped Maggie envision the crib, she thought of a creative and inexpensive way to make mattresses and crib skirts from leftover fabrics. She needed Tio's reassurance that their idea was a good one, since her confidence wavered when it seemed that the Christinitas would not sell. When she learned that the cribs were a success, her faith in her idea was reaffirmed.

Tio Daniel is highly creative. He saw new possibilities in an old table and thought of a way to convert Christina's "bed" into a real crib. He is confident that he and others can solve problems. He inspires Maggie and Christina to be more creative.

Joe did not seem to recognize or appreciate the creativity behind the Christinitas project. He is afraid to take risks, to think in unconventional ways, or to lose control in any situation.

Which forces in the Sanchez household tend to support and which stifle Christina's creativity?

Which adults in the Sanchez house recognize and support Christina's creativity?

Does the physical environment in the Sanchez household foster creativity?

Do parents need to be wealthy to provide a rich creative environment?

Comments: Since creativity involves a certain attitude and approach to problem solving, the effect of other people on Christina is fully as important as the physical environment around her. Christina is creative by nature, but encouragement helps to keep her creativity alive. Tio Daniel is the person who most encourages Christina's creativity through the pretending games he plays with Christina and his confidence in his and other people's imaginative ideas. Joe is the person who most discourages her creativity.

The Sanchez household offers many opportunities for Christina to use things in new and imaginative ways. For instance, wood, a tissue and a hand mirror are inexpensive materials that lend themselves to rearrangement and transformation into new creations. Money is irrelevant to the creation of a creative environment.

Did Maggie take too great a risk?

When Maggie got involved in the Christinitas project, what kinds of risks did she take?

What kinds of risks does any creative person take?

Comments: Maggie risked damaging her relationship with Joe as well as considerable financial loss. In general, creative people invest time, energy, thought, and emotions in a creative venture. Often they take financial risks as well. Risks of one kind or another are very often integral to creativity. If one is not willing to endure a risk, there is very little chance of creativity existing.

In what ways were the children shown in the documentary creative?

According to the parents of the children shown in the documentary, what is creativity?

How did the parents support their children's creativity?

Comments: While we watch the children in the documentary, a parent reminds us that creativity applies to more fields than art and music. It involves solving problems in imaginative ways and discovering a new way of looking at things. One parent comments that children need a chance to figure out problems on their own and see things in their own way.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

Have parents discuss their own creativity.

Do you remember being creative as a child? Was creativity valued in your home? How did this affect you?

Do you feel you've become more or less creative as you've grown older?

What are the things that prevent you from thinking and acting creatively?

If you've lost some of your creativity, do you think you can recapture it?

Comments: Encourage parents to think about the role creativity currently plays in their own lives, and the opportunities to be creative that exist right in their own homes. Encourage them to share their interests and strengths, areas in which they are likely to be imaginative and inventive. Since creativity involves an attitude toward life as well as an ability to do things in new ways, help them examine their own attitudes and the effects these attitudes have on their creativity.

Have parents share some ways their children are creative.

Do you think your children are creative?

When your children were born, did you think they would be creative?

As they grew, what signs made you think they were becoming more creative?

What's creative about the way toddlers play with toys?

In what ways are preschoolers creative? Do they seem more or less creative than toddlers?

Comments: Young children constantly astonish and delight their parents with the ways they see things and approach problems. Let parents share some of their favorite stories, then move into a discussion of how children's creativity expands during early childhood. It may be helpful here to hand out copies of "The Creative Climate" on page 206 (See also *Play and Fantasy*, a related topic.)

Talk about how parents can support their children's creativity.

How do you encourage your child's curiosity and help him or her see things in new ways?

What are some ways of encouraging children to solve problems? To think of alternatives? What opportunities for these things are available in the home?

What kinds of experiences in your home would your children enjoy recreating? How can you encourage your children to act out their experiences?

How do you find time for you and your children to do creative things together?

What effect do TV and other forms of entertainment seem to have on your children's creativity?

Comments: Parents don't need to do anything "special" to support their children's creativity. Like Tio Daniel, parents can encourage

their children to think in new ways on and off during the day, at bed time, or at supper. Supporting children's creativity involves responding appropriately to the things they've said or done.

Children decide which experiences are interesting enough to recreate. Parents can help by:

giving children first-hand experience in activities such as baking cookies, vacuuming, or dressing their younger siblings

giving children materials such as paint, crayons, and sand to work with

encouraging children to express themselves in a number of ways — by drawing a picture, making up a song, or telling a story, for example

reading stories and showing children examples of things created by other people.

When parents are shown children's creations, they show respect for their children's ideas by:

listening and watching

asking questions

allowing a child time to explore and experiment with new ideas on his or her own (rather than quickly giving the child an answer)

praising a child for thinking in new ways.

TV need not dampen children's creative drives. However, if children watch it so much that they have little time to interact with real people and things, then it is possible that this entertainment is cutting down on their:

knowledge of the world

ability to use creative materials

time to create and solve problems.

(See the unit on *Children and TV*.)

Make a list of inexpensive materials that encourage creativity

Parents may list such materials as:

sand and water

wood chips, wood boards, and glue

wood, a hammer and nails, bottle caps

paper and crayons

dress-up clothes (old clothes, shoes, pocket books)

plastic bottles, pots and pans

fabric pieces (cut up from old clothes and scarves)

empty boxes

stapler, scissors, paste, and paper

(See the unit on *Play and Fantasy*.)

Encourage parents to apply this information to some specific situations.

Give each parent a copy of the following situations. Ask them to discuss:

whether the parents in the examples were discouraging or encouraging their children's creativity

what some parents might have done differently to support their children's creativity.

1. Mother: "It's Daddy's birthday tomorrow, Marcel. What do you want to give him?"
Marcel: "Some bubble gum."
Mother: "Think of something else, honey. Bubble gum isn't good for teeth. Maybe you could make something for Daddy."
Marcel: "Yeah. I'll make Daddy a house of wood."
Mother: "But what would Daddy do with that? Marcel, why don't you draw Daddy a picture. He'd like one for his office."
2. 5-year-old Annie: "Look, Daddy, I set the table!"
Father: "Hey, what are you doing? You don't fold napkins that way. Fold them like this and put them under the forks."
3. Two-year-old Timmy walked to the shelf in the living room. The picture frame caught his eye.
"NO, Timmy," said his mother, knowing that his fingerprints would cloud the glass.
Timmy headed for the painted wooden doll from Russia — the one with several smaller dolls inside it.
"NO, Timmy. Let Mommy do it." She took the dolls apart to show him how to fit them together.
Timmy, however, moved on to the large picture books on the bottom shelf. He started to pull one out.
"Hey, Chuck," she called to Timmy's father. "Will you take Timmy? He's into everything."
4. Daddy: "Well, Corey. What kind of present do you want to make for Mommy?"
Corey: "A big bug."
Daddy: "A bug? That's a different idea! What are you going to use to make your bug?"
Corey: "A rock and a pipe cleaner."
Daddy: "Well, terrific. What are you going to do first?"

Comments: Encourage parents to identify how the parents in the first three examples were discouraging creativity by:

not letting their children explore and experiment
insisting that things be done in just one "right" way.

THE HANDICAPPED CHILD: A CHILD FIRST

I'll Dance at Your Wedding

How do you separate being "normal" from being "special?"

It's hard. Often there's no clear dividing line between the two. Most handicapped children are more like other children than different from them, even though handicapped children have some physical, emotional, or mental problem that will affect the course of their lives.

The way parents help a child to live with a handicap is very important. Except for the few very severely handicapped children, a handicap is not as important as the way the child feels about him or herself and the way others respond to the child and the handicapping condition. The parents' attitudes toward the handicap are important keys to the way their child develops.

THE BIG IDEAS

The child who has a handicap can usually lead a full life.

The parents of a handicapped child are most helpful when they accept the child's limitations but give him or her every opportunity to grow.

The challenge of raising a handicapped child can broaden and enrich the parents' lives.

THE SHOCK

Long before the baby is born, parents invest their dreams and hopes in the coming child. This is a time of dreaming and looking forward.

When parents are told their child has a handicap, it's bound to be a shock. Suddenly they feel different — set apart from other people. They may begin to wonder:

Why did this happen to me?

Is it something I did — or didn't do?

Is it from my side of the family?

What do I know about raising a handicapped child?

How is this going to turn out?

Most parents of handicapped children have some of these doubts and questions. One of their first tasks is to accept these painful feelings as normal and try to work through them.

A SPECIAL CHALLENGE

At some point, many parents learn that their own attitudes will make raising a handicapped child either a devastating experience or a rewarding challenge. They begin to rethink their assumptions about handicapped people. They re-evaluate what is important in life. They become able to look at the handicapped child's total growth and special gifts. And they figure out ways to meet the needs of both the handicapped child and other family members.

In other words, they accept the child's handicap. It isn't easy. It doesn't happen all at once. They never stop adjusting to the special problems that the child's handicap creates. They never stop changing or growing.

There are several steps parents can take to meet the challenge of raising a handicapped child.

Get a Diagnosis From a Doctor or Other Professional as Soon as a Handicap is Suspected

Early detection of a problem can help parents to understand their child's needs and to get special help. For instance, a child with a hearing loss may be fitted for a hearing aid. This may prevent some of the language or behavior problems that could result from a hearing loss.

Seek Out Support Groups and Professional Organizations For Handicapped Children and Their Parents

Today, many sources of help are available to provide information about handicapping conditions and services as well as comfort, understanding, and support for handicapped children and their families.

Treat the Handicapped Child as an Equal Member of the Family

The handicapped child wants and needs to be treated like other siblings as much as possible. Rules of behavior and routines such as "no hitting" and "bedtime" should apply to all — with minor modifications for the handicapped child, when necessary.

Try To Be Realistic About the Child's Handicap, But Provide All the Opportunities For Growth That Every Child Needs

It's important for parents to be honest about the handicap with the child and others and to recognize that he or she may have more difficulty learning certain things than other children. At the same time, parents need to recognize that the child needs the same opportunities to grow as a non-handicapped child, a chance to develop strengths as well as to work on weaknesses.

LOOKING FORWARD

What can a parent hope for a handicapped child? A few very severely handicapped children will need supervision or physical care all of their lives. Most handicapped children, however, will be able to enjoy the full range of life's activities — including a job, marriage, and children.

Whatever the handicap, the child will thrive on the love and respect of parents — just like any child.

For Further Information...

Behavior of Exceptional Children. Norris G. Haring. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1974.

Birth Defects and Your Baby. Jessyca Russel Gaver. New York: Lancer Books, Inc., 1972. (paperback)

The Exceptional Parent. Write to: P.O. Box 4944, Manchester, New Hampshire 03108 (magazine)

Help for the Handicapped Child. Florence Weiner. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973.

Mainstreaming Preschoolers. A series of handbooks prepared for parents and teachers. Separate manuals include: The Child with Mental Retardation, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Health Impairment, Emotional Disturbance, Speech Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, and Learning Disabilities. Write to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (1978)

The Vulnerable Child. Caring for Children series, No. 5. Lois B. Murphy and Ethel M. Leeper. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (booklet)

HELPING AIDERS

Long ago, we used to hear stories about children who were hidden away because of handicaps. Fortunately, all this has changed. Today handicapped children and their families have many sources of help:

Federal, State and Local Governments

Congress has recently passed laws that help to give handicapped children educational opportunities equal to those for non-handicapped children. Every handicapped child is entitled to a free and public education. To ensure this, an Individualized Educational Plan is drawn up to determine:

- what each child's educational needs are
- where he or she will receive educational services
- what other related services the child needs.

Parents must participate in and approve these plans.

Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, says that handicapped children should be educated with non-handicapped children as much as possible. This requirement has been called "educating handicapped children in the least restrictive environment."

Find out what your state or county is doing.

Clear Look, a program sponsored by the National Information Center for the Handicapped, gives out information on services for handicapped children, their parents, and other people who work with them. Staff can answer specific questions about services for your child and send you these information packets:

Practical Advice to Parents — a guide to finding services

Know Your Rights — answers to basic questions about the rights of all children to an appropriate education

Report from Clear Look — a periodic review of issues, resources and events.

All Clear Look materials are FREE from: Clear Look, Box 1492, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Private Organizations

For information on your child's handicap or services in your community, write to such organizations as the following:

- American Academy for Cerebral Palsy
1236 New Hampshire Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20036
- American Diabetes Association
18 East 40th Street
New York, New York 10017
- American Foundation for the Blind, Inc.
19 West 16th Street
New York, New York 10011
- American Heart Association
44 East 23rd Street
New York, New York 10010
- Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
5225 Grace Street, Lower Level
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15236
- Epilepsy Foundation of America
1628 L Street, N.W., Suite 405
Washington, D.C. 20036
- League for Emotionally Disturbed Children
171 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017
- Muscular Dystrophy Association of America, Inc.
810 7th Avenue
New York, New York 10019
- National Association of Hearing and Speech Agencies
1800 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
- National Association for Mental Health
10 Columbus Circle
New York, New York 10019
- The National Association for Retarded Children
2709 Avenue E East, P.O. Box 8100
Arlington, Texas 76010
- The National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Inc.
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60612
- National Foundation — March of Dimes
315 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10010
- United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc.
339 East 44th Street
New York, New York 10017

THE PROGRAM

I'll Dance at Your Wedding

Characters:

Laura Riley — a young mother

Hunter Riley — Laura's husband

Cameron Riley — their 6-month-old deaf son

Ned and Nancy Riley — Hunter's brother and sister-in-law

Zack, Andy, and Little Ned Riley — Ned and Nancy's sons

Wendy and Freddie — Hunter's friends who are getting married

Mark McFarland — a 14-year-old deaf boy

Christine and Jerry McFarland — Mark's parents

Drama:

Cameron cries. Laura rushes upstairs to pick him up. While she hold him, she thinks about past events. She remembers when Cameron didn't respond to people's voices and other sounds at a family picnic, when she and Hunter joked about the baby during her pregnancy, when they talked with the doctor about Cameron's handicap and future, and when they inserted Cameron's hearing aid and argued about whether he could or would ever hear.

Hunter arrives home and shows Laura the outfit he's bought for Cameron to wear to Wendy and Freddie's wedding. Remembering how the women at the sewing party talked about Cameron's hearing problem, Laura refuses to go to the wedding because people will stare at them. Hunter insists that they go. She tells him to leave her alone. He asks if she wants to isolate herself forever. She gets mad and says he acts as if Cameron had no handicap at all. Their argument goes on until Laura starts crying. She tells Hunter how depressed and helpless she feels.

They all attend the wedding. Hunter mingles with others and joins a baseball game. Laura, however, sits close to her sister-in-law and children. Wendy comes by to say hello. Picking up Cameron, she casually comments on his deafness and mentions that her 14-year-old cousin, Mark, is deaf. She describes some initial problems that Mark's parents had accepting his disability and points Mark out on the baseball field.

Laura intently watches Mark hit a ball, make a dramatic slide to Hunter's base and argue with Hunter over whether Mark was safe. After the game, Laura tells a surprised Hunter that Mark is deaf. Both see Mark as reassurance that a handicapped child can lead a full and "normal" life. The show ends with Hunter and Laura talking to Mark's parents.

Documentary:

Two handicapped children — one blind and one with an artificial limb — are shown in everyday situations overcoming obstacles to success. Their parents talk about their feelings, how they have dealt with both their child's and their own feelings, and their hopes for the future.

BEFORE THE PROGRAM

To Introduce the Theme...

At the playground, Jamie whispered to his best friend, Sam: "Let's get the wagon."

Sam got the wagon. "OK, Jamie, get in." Jamie grinned. "OK. Help me with my brace."

Sam and Jamie unlocked the brace on Jamie's leg and Jamie sat down in the wagon. Sam pulled Jamie and both boys made engine noises....

In the sandbox on the same playground, Carol shoveled sand into a pail. She used her "good" hand and hid the other in her sleeve.

When Carol was very young, she lost a finger in the car door. Neither she nor her parents could adjust to the loss. Now, she never lets others see that hand, and she rarely plays with other children.

Ask parents:

Which child is handicapped?

What is a handicap?

When does a disability severely restrict a child's development?

Why do you think these two children react so differently?

Help the group see that parents' attitudes toward their child's handicap have a great effect on the child's self-image and development.

OR

Encourage parents to discuss the images that come to mind when they hear the word "handicapped":

What's your first reaction when a blind, deaf, or mentally retarded person sits down next to you or walks across the street near you?

Why do you think many people feel uncomfortable when they are with a handicapped person?

How do you think you would react if you were told that your child had a handicap?

OR

Write the following on a chalk board or large piece of paper:

Here are some of the problems handicapped children may have:

Some handicapped children see nothing at all. Some see very poorly, even with thick glasses.

Some cannot hear at all. Some have partial hearing.

Some children suffer from poor health caused by a disease such as cancer or a defect such as a faulty heart valve.

A defect in the bones or nervous system may prevent some children from gaining full control of part or all of their bodies.

Some children have speech impairments; they have difficulty speaking. It is difficult for some children to listen, think, talk, or use symbols because their brains and central nervous systems are not operating in the normal way. Some children suffer from emotional problems. They may feel very insecure, guilty, or afraid most of the time. They may live in an imaginary world, and ignore or shy away from other people.

Ask parents if they know any children who have these handicaps. How do these children and their parents cope with the handicaps?

To Introduce the Program...

Ask parents to keep in mind these questions while they view *I'll Dance at Your Wedding*:

What are the similarities and differences between Laura's and Hunter's reactions to their child's handicap?

What do Laura and Hunter learn at the wedding that helps them cope with their child's handicap?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

What were the similarities and differences between Hunter's and Laura's reactions to Cameron's handicap?

In what ways were Hunter's and Laura's feelings and reactions the same?

How did their feelings and reactions differ?

Why do you think they felt as they did?

Do you think their feelings are typical of parents with handicapped children?

Comments: Both Hunter and Laura were upset when the doctor confirmed their suspicions about Cameron's deafness. Neither could totally believe what the doctor said.

At first, Hunter seemed to deny Cameron's handicap. He kept hoping that Cameron's deafness would be temporary, that Cameron would learn to talk and be "normal." Although Hunter recognized the need for a hearing aid, he didn't seem to focus on Cameron's difference, nor was he aware of the stares that Laura noticed. Hunter talked to Cameron as if he could hear and tried to give him the same kinds of experiences he'd give to a non-handicapped child.

Laura, on the other hand, seemed particularly aware of Cameron's disability and eager to protect him and herself from stares and other awkward reactions. She gave up hope of Cameron ever being able to talk because the one deaf person she knew was unintelligible. Feeling depressed, helpless, and alone in her despair, Laura

tended to withdraw from others, to limit her expectations for Cameron, and to limit his experiences.

Both Hunter's and Laura's feelings are natural. Alan O. Ross, in *The Exceptional Child in the Family*, says that parents go through a series of steps such as mourning, denial, guilt, and despair during the process of accepting that their child has a handicap.

Neither parent was realistic in his or her perceptions. Hunter's tendency to give Cameron the same opportunities he'd give a non-handicapped child, however, was a more positive approach.

What did Laura and Hunter learn at the wedding that helped them cope with Cameron's handicap?

What did they learn from Mark about deaf people?

How do you think this will affect their interactions with Cameron?

What do you think Laura gained from learning about the problems that Mark's parents experienced?

How could this information help Laura and Hunter?

Comments: Laura and Hunter may have learned:

that some deaf people talk, read lips, and use sign language

that handicapped and non-handicapped people are more alike than different

that handicapped children need the same opportunities to develop as non-handicapped children

that other parents of handicapped children have problems accepting their children's handicaps and that Laura's and Hunter's feelings are normal.

What kinds of support were available to Hunter and Laura?

What kinds of services were available to Cameron and his parents?

What was the value of getting a diagnosis from the doctor? Why was it fortunate that Cameron's problem was detected early?

How helpful was the doctor in helping Laura and Hunter adjust to Cameron's handicap?

Which people at the wedding were the most helpful to Laura and Hunter? What kinds of comments or actions were helpful?

What kinds of support do you think the McFarlands can offer Hunter and Laura in the future? Why is their support so valuable?

Comments: People reacted in very different ways to Laura and Hunter. Their only formal means of support came from the clinic. While the information given was factual, there did not appear to be a support system to help parents deal with the impact of the news. The sewing group's comments were, obviously, less than supportive. The Rileys were trying; and even Zach, in his way, did much to help Cameron. Surprisingly, though, the greatest support was obtained at the

wedding from people they barely knew — Wendy and the McFarlands.

In general, the most helpful comments about a handicap are honest, matter-of-fact, and informative. Less helpful comments are those that avoid acknowledging that the handicap exists or unrealistic comments such as: "He'll outgrow it," or "You hardly notice it after a while."

Be sure that parents are aware of what a diagnosis is and why it's important to have a professional evaluation as soon as possible.

What do you think Cameron's future will be?

What are some factors that determine a handicapped child's future? Do you think Laura's and Hunter's attitudes toward Cameron's handicap will be a deciding factor in his future?

Are Hunter and Laura realistic in expecting Cameron to succeed as well as Mark has?

Comments: It is, of course, impossible to predict what Cameron's future will be. A great many factors determine a handicapped child's future:

- the child's feelings of competence and self-esteem
- the child's determination
- the parent's attitudes toward their child and the handicap
- the sources of support available
- the severity of the child's handicap.

Why do you think the children's parents in the documentary want them to participate in as many "normal" activities as possible?

What were some of the things the blind child and the boy with the artificial limb were able to do?

Were you surprised when you saw their activities?

What kinds of advice did the boys' parents give?

Comments: Both children were able to participate in a wide range of activities that one might think would be precluded by their handicaps. The boy with the artificial limb swung on a tire swing, used a spatula, ate with a fork, and dove and swam in a pool. The blind child opened a door, walked unaided on the sidewalk, attended a child care center, took a wrapper off a popsicle, and went down a slide.

Their parents give them "normal" activities so that they can develop in every way possible. The boys want to be treated like other children and do have the same kinds of needs. Their parents warn against doing things for the children that they can do on their own.

BEYOND THE PROGRAM

If there are parents who have handicapped children, have them share their experiences.

What process did you go through as you learned to accept your child's handicap?

How have your lives been changed by your child's handicap?

Are there ways in which raising a handicapped child has enriched your life or the lives of other family members?

Comments: Encourage parents of handicapped children to share their feelings. If you have no such parents in your group, you might invite a few parents of handicapped children, their friends, or social workers who work with handicapped children to speak to your group.

Have parents discuss the sources of help available to handicapped children and their families.

What's the first step parents should take if they suspect that their child has a handicap?

What sources of help are available?

Comments: This might be an appropriate time to give parents a copy of "Helping Hands" (page 217) and to discuss the rights of handicapped children.

You might also make sure that parents are aware of CHILD FIND. CHILD FIND is a program designed to locate handicapped children and provide early screening and diagnosis of their handicaps. The program sponsor, the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, gives support to state and local groups so that well-trained people can perform these services in each state. Parents can find out about the CHILD FIND network in their area by contacting their family doctor, pediatrician, health clinic, local social service organization, or school district.

What kinds of futures do handicapped people have?

Do you know of handicapped people who have led full lives? Do you know some whose lives have been severely limited by their handicaps? How would you explain such different outcomes?

How does your school system provide for handicapped children?

How have transportation, building design, and employment opportunities for the handicapped changed in recent years?

Comments: Each of us works on and excels in some areas of development and not others. Handicapped persons may have some limits placed on their growth from the start. For instance, a blind person could not choose to become an airline pilot or surveyor. But handi-

caps rarely cut off all areas of development and usually don't limit how far a person can go in the directions he or she chooses.

Parents who are interested in learning more about handicapped persons who have led full lives may enjoy reading:

The Story of My Life, by Helen Keller

To Race The Wind, by Harold Krents

Like Normal People, by Robert Meyers

To Catch An Angel, by Robert Russell

The Other Side of the Mountain, by E. G. Valens.

Encourage parents to think about ways to help handicapped and non-handicapped children to get along with each other.

Divide the parents into two groups and give them the following activity. Ask one group to answer the first question and the other to respond to the second.

Tony is a 5-year-old child who has cerebral palsy. Because of his handicap, Tony lacks control over many muscles in his body. Over the years, he has made tremendous progress. Now he is as independent as any 5-year-old. He walks, dresses himself (although slowly), and feeds himself. He's even begun to read! However, he has a jerky, somewhat spastic walk and he sometimes grimaces as he talks.

He has just begun regular kindergarten in public school. One day he comes home and bursts into tears. "Somebody made fun of me. He said I was stupid. He said I walk funny."

What would you do to help Tony if you were his parents?

What would you do as the parents of the child who made fun of Tony?

Comments: Encourage parents to think of ways to help the boys to deal with their feelings and differences. For instance, the parents of the non-handicapped child might explain, "Tony does walk differently than you and I. It's harder for him to move the muscles in his legs than it is for you and me. But it's OK to be different. Everybody is."

You may want to mention PL 94-142 and discuss the importance of parents preparing their children for "mainstreaming" experiences.